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Ethel Newton,

From her affectionate Uncle,

Richard Welton

Londesborough Rectory,

February 1895.

POEMS.

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WOOD-NOTES

AND CHURCH-BELLS.

BY

THE REV. RICHARD WILTON, M.A.,

ST. CATHARINE'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

"I sing of brooks and blossomes, birds and bowers:
Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers.....
I sing of time's trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red and lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights * * *
* * * I sing, and ever shall
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all."
HERRICK: "Hesperides" (1648.)

LONDON:

BELL AND DALDY, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.

1873.

PR
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TO

MY LIFE-FRIEND

AND A TRUE LOVER OF SACRED SONG,

THE HON. AND REV.

ORLANDO W. W. FORESTER,

THESE POEMS,

(A COUNTRY PASTOR'S BYE-WORK,)

ARE

GRATEFULLY AND AFFECTIONATELY

DEDICATED.

868841

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WOOD-NOTES
AND CHURCH-BELLS.

Wood-Notes and Church-Bells.

"Wood-Notes and Church-Bells" here unite their strain:
"Wood-Notes," as of the birds, simple and clear,
Uttered to please the sympathetic ear,
Where sweet flowers smile in grove and leafy lane.
"Church-Bells," which sound, and cease, and sound again,
The sad or meditative heart to cheer,
Through all the changes of the circling year,
In days of sunshine, or of cloud and rain.
"Wood-Notes and Church-Bells," let their strains unite,
Voices of earth and heaven to soothe our way;
Let Nature's music still the ear delight,
And gracious echoes mortal cares allay;
Till "Wood-Notes" 'mid angelic warblings cease,
And "Church-Bells" ring us to eternal peace!

Londesborough Rectory,
East Yorkshire, 1873.

THE SPARROW.*

A Sparrow lighted chirping on a spray
Close to my window, as I knelt in prayer,
Bowed by a heavy load of anxious care.
The morn was bitter, but the bird was gay,
And seemed by cheery look and chirp to say—
What though the snow conceals my wonted fare,
Nor have I barn or storehouse anywhere,
Yet I trust Heaven e'en on a winter's day.
That little bird came like a wingèd text,
Fluttering from out God's Word to soothe my breast:
What though my life with wintry cares be vext,
On a kind Father's watchful love I rest;
He meets this moment's need, I leave the next,
And, always trusting, shall be always blest!

* Set to music by the Rev. Sir F. Gore Ouseley, Bart., Professor of Music in the University of Oxford. (Novello.)

THE ACACIA AND THE YEW.

Mantled in the softest green
An acacia tall is seen,
Of our garden crownèd Queen:

Shining like a thing of light,
With its blossoms milky white,
And its feathery foliage bright;

From its tasselled tresses fair
Scattering on the Summer air
Fragrance delicate and rare.

Near it climbing roses grow,
And our children play below,
While the hours in sunshine go:

O'er the churchyard wall hard by
Rises up a yew-tree high,
Like a cloud against the sky—

Like a gloomy cloud it lowers
On the smiling Summer bowers,
And the fair acacia flowers.

There it stands in shadow deep,
While the dead beneath it sleep,
And the mourners come to weep.

Sylvan types of earthly change—
Life and Death in contrast strange
Meeting within narrowest range.

Here, the acacia's dancing plume,
Light-green leaf and milk-white bloom—
There, the yew's funereal gloom.

Yonder, mouldering headstones grey,
Here, bright children at their play—
Sombre yew—acacia gay!

But alas! those flowers will die,
And the Summer sunshine fly,
And dark clouds obscure the sky.

Leaf by leaf will flutter down
Under Autumn's earliest frown,
And the acacia lose its crown.

All its branches will stand bare
Shivering in the bitter air—
And no children will be there.

Gone the gladness and the bloom,
Gone the dancing Summer-plume—
And instead—long Winter gloom.

Then the yew shines forth serene
In its robe of evergreen,
Smiling on that leafless scene;

Queen-like, lifts its stately head,
Gracious influence to shed
O'er the slumbers of the dead;

Throws a tender radiance round
Headstone grey and grassy mound,
And makes glad the burial-ground.

Life and beauty still are there,
When the garden-bowers are bare—
Dark acacia—yew-tree fair!

So when this life's Summer day,
With its flowers, has passed away,
Faith will put on bright array;

And Religion like a Queen,
Raise aloft her head serene—
All her joys are evergreen!

THE HERB BENEDICT,

COMMONLY CALLED HERB BENNET.*

When wayside favourites pink and blue
Attract the eye with mingling hue
A modest flower comes forth to view,
Scant notice winning;

* The trefoiled leaf of the *Herba Benedicta* (*Geum urbanum*, Common Avens, Herb Bennet—a corruption of Benedict) was anciently regarded as symbolical of the Holy Trinity; and it is said that the Early English foliage, adorning the capitals of pillars in our Cathedrals is a conventional representation of the stem-leaves of this plant, which served the same sacred purpose in England as the Shamrock in Ireland, as a natural and familiar emblem of the Trinity in Unity. The Herb Bennet was also extensively used in mural paintings and other decorations, when leafage was accurately copied from Nature. The small yellow flowers of the Herb Benedict come out about Trinity Sunday.

Few pause a moment to enquire
Its name, and fewer to admire
The texture plain of its attire
And homely spinning.

As one by one the flowers we greet
Which in our children's garlands meet,
It is not seen amid the sweet
Familiar faces;
Such honour NOW it never gains—
All disregarded it remains
In hedgerows, and in dusty lanes,
Woods and waste places.

It was not always so: of yore
A crown of holiness it wore
And high symbolic meaning bore
And name of blessing;

And then its dignity was such
Men could not honour it too much
Or pluck it with too soft a touch
Of kind caressing.

For gifted with a higher dower
Than fairest bloom of fading flower,
To thoughts beyond the passing hour
Its FORM invited;
And like a wayside homily,
Its trefoil leaves taught men to see
The wonder of the Sacred Three
In One united.

Thus blest with a peculiar grace
The Benedict held up its face
Amongst the flowers, and found a place
In garlands vernal;

Nor in such transient wreaths alone—
For sculptors copied it in stone,
And in grey Minsters it has grown
In wreaths eternal.

Where organ-music rolls along
To anthem high and holy song,
It clusters round the pillars strong
Their crown adorning;
And while it seems to join the praise
And "Holy, holy, holy" raise,
What recks it of these evil days
And the world's scorning.

So let the world now pass me by,
If in my life it but descry
Some shadow of God's doctrine high,
Some witness-bearing;

What matter how on earth I fare,
If I am made a pillar there,
And everlasting garlands wear,
Heaven's glory sharing.

THE PRUNING OF THE VINE.

"My Father is the husbandman."—*John* xv. 1—8.

Amidst the clusters of a Vine,
I saw a glorious Hand Divine,
Backward and forward, glance and shine.

With gleaming knife, now here, now there,
Stroke after stroke—it did not spare
Green leaf, or fruit, or tendril fair.

Wondering at that strange sight, I cried,
Lord, turn the fatal steel aside,
Spoil not that bough's luxuriant pride.

See how its swelling grapes hang low,
Its leaves in mantling beauty grow,
While spicy odours from it flow.

Ah, Lord, Thy chastening hand restrain,
Strike not that fruitful bough again,
Give it sweet sunshine, dew, and rain.

Are there not other branches, bare
Of clustering fruit, which need Thy care?
Expend Thy sharp correction there!

The Heavenly Pruner made reply—
The barren branches I pass by,
Unworthy of My culture high.

Clothed with redundant leaves they grow,
And make an empty, Summer show—
Soon to be sundered with a blow.

On fruitful boughs My care I spend,
And sharpness with My love I blend:
When most severe, then most their Friend.

The thick green leaves I cut away
To let the sunshine have full play
And touch the grapes with ripening ray.

I crop each useless, tendrilled shoot
Lest it should rob the swelling fruit
Of moisture rising from the root.

Nay, under My keen knife will fall
E'en fruit itself when rank or small.
Lest, sparing some, I forfeit all.

Fruit I come seeking evermore—
Branches weighed down and clustered o'er
With Eshcol grapes, a purple store.

Fruit is My glory, and I smite
The boughs in which I most delight,
To make them glorious in My sight!

ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN DECEMBER.

Sweet bird, that singest on the leafless bough,
Charming December's transitory ray
With trills and warblings of melodious May;
Thy single voice holds us enraptured now
In Winter's silence. Tell us, What art thou?
A Mourner for the brightness past away?
A Prophet of some far-off vernal day,
Which shows to thee, perched high, its radiant brow?
Not so! No touches of a useless sorrow
For vanished bliss thy happy thoughts annoy;
No restless longings for a brighter morrow;
Thy heart and tongue are filled with present joy:
Man's Teacher thou, and of persuasive power,
To praise kind Heaven for mercies of the hour!

HOME.

Homeward from my work returning
Lo! a lamp with steady ray
In my distant window burning
Welcomed me at close of day;
O'er the darkening fields it gleamed
And of rest the symbol seemed.

Thankfully I saw the token—
Shining on me from afar—
Of domestic peace unbroken;
And I hailed it as the star
Which through all my life had shed
Cheering radiance on my head.

Oh! the joy of fireside blessings,
Children's voices, smile of wife,
Bliss of infantile caressings,
Heart-refreshing wine of life—
Purple glow of Paradise
Lingering still about our skies.

On the wall the firelight dances
As joy dances in our hearts,
Interchange of kindly glances
Mutual happiness imparts;
Heavenly watchers from above
Hover o'er that scene of love.

Now the long day's labour ending,
Under our own Vine we rest,
And the brow of Care unbending
By Love's hand is smooth'd and blest;
One such hour may well repay
Hardest toil of longest day.

Blessèd be the God of Heaven,
God of all earth's families,
Who to weary men has given
Homes of rest—sweet oases,
Wells and palm trees, smile and song,
As to Heaven they march along.

THE SUN-DIAL ON THE CHURCH PORCH,

LONDESBOROUGH—1764.

Though circling shadows of a hundred years
  Have traced Time's reckoning on this Dial-stone,
  Unless from Heaven a sunbeam now be thrown
The figured disk to me a blank appears.
But lo! a sudden ray the graveyard cheers,
  And Time's own finger on the wall is shown,
  By instantaneous bar of darkness known—
Telling the hour with stroke which no man hears.
So Holy Scripture precious Truth conceals
  Until the Spirit darts a heavenly ray
Upon its outspread pages, and reveals,
  As to the saints of old, to me to-day,
The world-encircling shadow of that Tree
Which points to life and immortality!

THE DOVE.

When in the sultry noons of summertide
The song-birds hide
Mid secret boughs where not a leaf is stirred,
Or note is heard
Of all the rapturous melodies of spring
With which the woodland echoes used to ring.

And silenced by the burden and the heat,
The voices sweet
Of feathered minstrels by the wayside cease,
And slumbrous Peace
Possesses field and grove and honied air,
And draws a filmy veil o'er landscape fair:

There comes from verdurous glooms a sound I love
Of brooding dove—
A soft, low note from heart of shadows deep
Which round it sleep—

It seems the voice of Peace itself I hear
Stealing upon the sense with cadence clear.

And not the sense alone, the inmost soul
  Owns its control,
And welcomes in that sylvan note the sign
  Of Peace divine
Which once came gently gliding from above
On the smooth pinions of the Holy Dove.

Come now, blest Dove, from heavenly bowers, and
    bring
  Peace on Thy wing;
Oh, bid my hushed and wistful heart rejoice
  With Thy sweet voice:
Earth's pleasant voices fade away and cease,
Oh, let me hear Thy music whispering peace.

THE WELL-HEAD.

I traced a little brook to its well-head,
Where, amid quivering weeds, its waters leap
From the earth, and hurrying into shadow, creep
Unseen but vocal in their deep-worn bed.
Hawthorns and hazels interlacing wed
With roses sweet, and overhang the steep
Moss'd banks, while through the leaves stray sun-
beams peep,
And on the whispering stream faint glimmerings shed.
Thus let my life flow on, through green fields gliding,
Unnoticed not unuseful in its course,
Still fresh and fragrant, though in shadow hiding,
Holding its destined way with quiet force,
Cheered with the music of a peace abiding,
Drawn daily from its ever-springing source.

THE SWALLOWS.

Peaceful across the level lawn they glide,
O'er latticed shadows of the Summer trees,
Weaving short flights all day with careless ease,
As if for ever destined to abide
In this green nook. No thought of regions wide
Which they must traverse soon, of boisterous breeze,
Or league on league of far-resounding seas,
'Neath purple wing and snowy breast they hide.
Enough for them that now the skies are blue,
And food sufficient fills the humming air;
Of darker days they take no forward view:
Oh, that their happy wisdom we could share,
And leave to-morrow to His faithful Word,
Who tells the flittings both of man and bird!

THE RESTING PLACE.*

In serious or in cheerful hours,
My frequent footsteps wander by
The churchyard nook of grass and flowers,
Where I shall lie.

Near it the chancel rises grey,
And drooping branches gently sigh,
And throw their shadows all the day,
Where I shall lie.

There long has slumbered precious dust,
O'er which our eyes were wont to weep,
Till sorrow merged in perfect trust—
Where I shall sleep.

* Set to music by the Rev. Sir F. G. Ouseley, Bart., Professor of Music in the University of Oxford. (Novello.)

And there on quiet Sabbath days
Is heard a murmur soft and deep,
The voice of common prayer and praise—
Where I shall sleep.

While overhead on happy wing
The birds flit by and build their nest,
And smooth their plumes, and sweetly sing,
Where I shall rest.

And there sounds forth the Word divine,
And there are seen the Symbols blest,
That I am His and He is mine—
Where I shall rest.

So humbly trusting faithful Grace,
I pass with unaverted eyes
The peaceful, consecrated place,
Whence I shall rise!

OUR CHILDREN.

We watched our children at their happy play
Amongst old gnarlèd orchard-trunks low bent
By gales, that years ago their force had spent
On stems then young and weak, now stiff and grey:
Traces are borne by these bowed trees to-day
Of winds, long Summers since, that singing went
Through leaf and blossom, or the ripe fruit sent
Rolling in dewy grass—and passed away.
Thus causes vanish, their results remaining—
To winds long lulled these orchard-trees still bend;
Those children from our words and ways are gaining
A bias which will sway them to life's end—
Traces they still will show of childhood's training,
When with the fading Past our memories blend.

ON AN INFANT'S DEATH.

A little life,
Five summer months of gladness,
Without one cloud of sorrow, sin, or strife—
Cut short by sudden gloom and wintry sadness.

A little mound,
By buttress grey defended,
Watered with tears and garlanded all round,
By gentle hands affectionately tended.

A little cot,
Empty, forlorn, forsaken,
Silent remembrancer that he is not—
Gone—past our voice to lull or kiss to waken.

A little frock
He wore, or hat that shaded
His innocent brow—seen with a sudden shock
Of grief for that dear form so quickly faded.

A little flower,
Because he touched it, cherished—
Fragile memorial of one happy hour
Before the beauty of our blossom perished.

A little hair,
Secured with trembling fingers—
All that is left us of our infant fair,
All we shall see of him while this life lingers.

A little name,
In parish records written,
A passing sigh of sympathy to claim
From other fathers for a father smitten.

But a great trust
Irradiates our sorrow,
That though to-day his name is writ in dust,
We shall behold it writ in heaven to-morrow.

And a great peace
Our troubled soul possesses,
That though to embrace him these poor arms must cease,
Our lamb lies folded in the Lord's caresses.

A little pain
To point his life's brief story—
A few hours' mortal weariness, to gain
Unutterable rest, unending glory.

A little prayer,
By lips Divine once spoken,
"Thy will be done!"—is breathed into the air
From hearts submissive though with accents broken.

A little while
And Time no more shall sever—
But we shall see him with his own sweet smile,
And clasp our darling in our arms for ever!

UNDER THE SNOW.*

Our darling of the Summer hours,
Our sunbeam in the Summer glow,
Our blossom 'mid the dancing bowers,
Alas! he lieth low
Under the snow.

We mourn him through the Winter gloom,
We miss him in the fireside glow,
Which dances round the curtained room,
The while he lieth low
Under the snow.

* Set to music by the Rev. Sir F. Gore Ouseley, Bart., Professor of Music in the University of Oxford.

Oh, no! 'tis but our darling's dust;
He basks in Heaven's eternal glow,
Folded in arms that we can trust:
He lies not low
Under the snow.

ON A WALL-FLOWER FROM GETHSEMANE.

TO BE PLANTED NEAR MY INFANT'S GRAVE.

Welcome, sweet wall-flower, from that holy place
To which the feet of Jesus ofttimes strayed
For calm seclusion in its olive shade:
Breathe here the sad traditions of thy race
Since that cold Paschal moon, when His bowed face
Bedewed the earth, with vernal blooms arrayed:
Here shed thy fragrance where my flower was laid,
And mix his memory with a Saviour's grace.
Thou comest from that sorrow-shaded ground
Where once Christ bore for us His grief untold;
Our blossom fair, transplanted hence, is found
Where now Christ walks yon glorious streets of gold:
We love the flower from dim Gethsemane,
And precious is our blossom, Lord, to Thee!

A BEREAVED MOTHER'S SIGH BEFORE A SUMMER HOLIDAY.

"He stays at home!" the sheltering buttress under;
No wish for change disturbs his grassy bed,
Where petals of the rose are softly shed,
And wild bees murmuring cull ambrosial plunder.
His eyes will never open wide with wonder,
As by some shining lake his feet are led,
Or agile climb some mountain's cloud-capt head;
Nor for his ears will falling waters thunder.
While we are wanderers, "he stays at home!"
He cannot share the joy of merry brothers,
Or happy sisters, as afar they roam;
He sees not, hears not, feels not like the others:
But who can tell what glories meet his eyes
Where his soul rests at home in Paradise?

THE MOTTO ON THE BELL.*

"JESUS BE OUR SPEED," 1623.

On the crown of an old bell,
  High up in our church-tower grey,
Is a motto I love well,
  I discovered it to-day;
Difficult but dear to read,
It is "Jesus be our speed."

Thus this faithful bell, thought I,
  Has for centuries flung the fame,
Like sweet incense to the sky,
  Of that precious "worthy Name,"
Never has the bell been stirred
But it woke the harmonious word.

* In Kirkby Wharfe or Grimston Church.

Softly on the country round,
Hamlet, meadow, river, hill,
Falls its soothing Sabbath sound,
For it speaks of Jesus still;
Into many a weary breast
Breathing thoughts of Heavenly rest.

On a happy, bridal day,
Listen to its voice again,
"Jesus speed them on their way,"
Is its sweet and joyous strain;
Brighter is the marriage-feast
Where He is a welcome guest.

When upon a sadder morn,
Friends around a dying bed,
Sob a prayer from hearts forlorn,
It has caught the words they said,
Mercy to his soul be given,
"Jesus speed him on to Heaven."

When to gather souls for God
  First He set me o'er this fold,
As within the church I stood,*
  And, alone, the bell I tolled,
It, as I for succour sighed,
"Jesus be thy speed" replied.

Lord, may I proclaim below,
  What that bell proclaims above,
How for life and death we owe
  All to Thy dear Name and love;
When I preach may men give heed,
Oh! may "Jesus be my speed!"

* A new incumbent rings the bell of his church at his induction. It may be recalled that on this occasion saintly George Herbert was found prostrate in prayer and tears.

AN INCIDENT AT THE COMMUNION TABLE.*

At the Lord's Table waiting, robed and stoled,
Till all had knelt around, I saw a sign!
In the full chalice sudden splendours shine,
Azure and crimson, emerald and gold.
I stooped to see the wonder, when, behold!
Within the cup a countenance Divine
Looked upwards at me through the trembling wine,
Suffused with tenderest love and grief untold.
The comfort of that sacramental token
From Memory's page Time never can erase;
The glass of that rich window may be broken,
But not the mirrored image of His grace,
Through which my dying Lord to me has spoken,
At His own Holy Table, face to face!

* The east window of Kirkby Wharfe or Grimston Church is filled with stained glass by Capronnier, of Brussels, in memory of Albert, Lord Londesborough, the subject being the Crucifixion.

GOING TO CHURCH.

We plucked fresh violets as we walked along
Through quiet lanes to Church. A genial flood
Of sunshine lured each bead-like hedgerow bud
To unfurl its green. The air was full of song
And those sweet-mingled voices that belong
To happy vernal hours in field and wood.
Subdued by that fair scene silent we stood
Mid Nature's joyous, inarticulate throng.
But suddenly we heard our Church bells ringing,
Hallowing the calm, bright morn with solemn sound,
In sweet accord with songs and sunshine, flinging
Their gracious invitations all around—
Bidding us come where psalms would soon be winging
A burst of choral praise to Heaven's high bound.

ON MY PARISH-REGISTER CHEST.

In the scant compass of this iron chest
Lie the brief records of three hundred years,
The mute memorials of their smiles and tears;
Here side by side ten generations rest,
As with Time's iron hand together prest;
A catalogue of names all that appears—
Faded their joys, forgotten are their fears,
And all the eager hopes they once possessed.
With mournful mind I turn the yellow pages,
Read the dim notice of a long-past wedding,
How one was born, and overleaf was buried;
Thus swift and silent pass successive ages,
Like autumn trees their leaves for ever shedding,
Which into vast Eternity are hurried.

ON A CITY WEEK-DAY EVENING SERVICE.

Close to the tumult of the busy street
Rises the House of God with aspect calm,
Whence floats the voice of prayer and holy psalm,
And strangely blends with tramp of passing feet.
There week by week a little company meet
To soothe their souls with Gilead's healing balm,
And as by Elim's wells and grove of palm
Find in their desert-march refreshment sweet.
Thus from the city's thronged and noisy centre,
By one short step, and in a moment's space,
Upon a scene of holy peace you enter:
So suddenly the dying Christian's spirit
Steps out of earth into that glorious place,
That Heavenly Temple, which the saints inherit.

THE NIGHTINGALE;

OR, THE JOY OF PRAISE.

The nightingale in happy mood
Hid in a leafy solitude,
A labyrinth of underwood
And tangled mazes;
When other birds are hushed to rest,
O'er the dear secret of its nest
From golden tongue and throbbing breast
Pours sweetest praises.

Beneath the silent moonlight float
On the rapt ear from that small throat
Strange quivering trills of richest note,
Its bliss to utter:

Deep, solemn gladness is its dower;
Not melancholy rules the hour
When blossoms dance upon the bower
And green leaves flutter.

O nightingale, thou teachest me
The happiness of praise to see;
Blest bird, I fain would rival thee:
"Awake, my glory!"
By me let God's high praise be sung,
Like incense on the night air flung;
Awake, my soul! Awake, my tongue!
Tell out thy story.

Silence to God let others keep
And world-worn hearts in slumber steep,
I will pour forth the gladness deep
Within me glowing;

My grateful tribute I will bring
To Thee my Maker, Saviour, King,
And with heart-melody will sing
And peace o'erflowing.

Blest bird, I shall outrival soon
The joy of thy divinest tune
Sung to the listening April moon,—
In regions glorious
Sitting beneath the Tree of Life
With fairest fruits and blossoms rife,
O'er pain and death, o'er sin and strife,
Through Christ victorious!

MY STUDY.*

My Study! gratefully I gaze around
Rejoicing in its quaint and quiet look,
Each favourite picture and each well-loved book,
And the calm feeling of its sacred ground.
A garden view closed by the narrow bound
Of buttress'd orchard wall—green, sheltered nook,
With glimpse of woodland haunted by the rook,
While seen far off the incessant Trains resound.
Amidst my books I sit, tranquil, alone,
And hear afar the great world rushing by,
My silent work by busy men unnoted:
"Some day" Faith whispers "'twill be better known,
Seed sown in secret will bear fruit on high,
Immortal are the hours to God devoted."

* Milford Hall, Kirkby Wharfe.

THE FATHER AND CHILD.

As up and down a shady place
I walked with melancholy pace,
A cloud upon my heart and face
  Of sin and sadness;
Suddenly flashing on the view
My little boy in white and blue
Ran towards me up the avenue
  With look of gladness.

And all a father's love leapt out
Instinctively, and clung about
The child, subduing fear and doubt
  With tender yearning:
As if he had been sent to prove
By living sign that higher Love
Which waits and watches from above
  Each son's returning.

Who made the eye, shall He not see?
The ear, shall He not hear? And He
Who, in creating, gave to me
A father's feeling,
Shall He not feel?—and kindly greet
A son that weeps before His feet—
With kiss of reconcilement sweet
His pardon sealing.

For one constraining cause alone
That child was dear—he was my own—
Spontaneously my love had grown—
And how much rather
Shall I, "the work of His own hand"
The yearning love of God command—
Can He my prayers and tears withstand
Who is my Father!

THE SPARROW:

ITS TEACHINGS IN PROVIDENCE AND GRACE.

Stay, little bird, that underneath my eaves
Hast nestled, or amidst my jasmine leaves,
Ere yet thou seek the shaking harvest sheaves
Listen and linger;
Let others with indifference or a frown
Thy homely form regard, and feathers brown,
I know there points to thee in field or town
The Lord's own finger.

As once on earth, so still from heaven above,
His holy finger points to thee in love,
A common sparrow, not a burnisht dove,
And bids us gather
Lessons of comfort from thy history small,
Since God observes thee, feeds thee, telleth all
Thy flittings, neither shalt thou droop or fall
Without our Father.

Our Father—since we boast that higher birth—
What though we live unnoticed here on earth,
And all concealed our labour and our worth
In circle narrow,
Our names are known beyond the farthest star,
God notes whate'er we suffer, do, and are,
Men—and immortal—we outvalue far
Full many a sparrow.

Stay, little bird, nor from my garden fly,
For lo! upon thy feathers I espy
A gleam more bright than silver to the eye
Or golden yellow:
In such unearthly beauty was equipt
That other,* when from open palms it slipt
Of Israel's priest—in purple life drops dipt
Of its dead fellow.

* LEVITICUS xiv. 4. "Then shall the priest take two birds (Margin, sparrows) alive and clean—and one be killed over running water in an earthen vessel and the living bird dipt in its blood—and let loose into the open field."

Thus with the eye of faith I seem to see
Marks of the mystery which makes us free—
A shadow of the Risen One in thee
Before me flitting:
As with a finger silently is shown
His fairest Form who suffered to atone—
By simple sparrow on the wing, or lone
On house-top sitting.

Then linger round my dwelling, where no harm
Shall happen to thee and no fear alarm,
But thou shalt live—safe by a double charm—
In peace unbroken:
Stay always, little bird, nor fly aloof,
But hop and chirp in shadow of my roof,
And be to me of Providence the proof
Of Grace the token!

MABEL AND THE FLOWERS.

As o'er my sermon silently I bent,
Lo! at my side a little maiden stood—
Nor broke the silence—wrapt in scarlet hood
Which fringed her forehead, and new beauty lent
To her fair face. Primrose with violet blent
She brought me, gathered fresh from field or wood;
And seemed herself—so sweet her look and good—
A breathing blossom from God's garden sent.
Nay, like an angel came that little maiden,
With timely help and wisdom from above:
For in the flowers with which her hands were laden
Shone thoughts of God fragrant with peace and love;
Oh, that to me—ascending and descending
Such angel oft appeared such succour lending!

THE LITTLE CHILD AND THE THUNDERSTORM.

He listened, as the thunder rolled on high,
And whispered 'Hark,' with infantine alarm
And finger raised—then hastened to my arm
For shelter from the tumult of the sky.
What could avail all heaven's artillery
Against the power of that encircling charm?
He felt himself incapable of harm
Beneath a father's touch and voice and eye.
Oh, ponder well this parable, my soul,
And from a little child the lesson learn,
Whither for instant succour thou may'st turn
When threatening clouds of danger o'er thee roll;
God is thy help—no evil can betide
A child that nestles at his Father's side!

APPLE BLOSSOMS.*

Apple blossoms, full of gladness,
Smiling o'er my orchard walk,
Tell of Winter's vanished sadness,
And of songs and sunshine talk;
Pink and white, all rarely painted,
Like the rosy dawn of life,
Bright with hope and unacquainted
With the shadow and the strife.

Apple blossoms, full of sadness,
Raining on my orchard walk,
Tell of Spring's departed gladness,
And of care and sorrow talk:

* Set to music by the Rev. Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, Bart., Professor of Music in the University of Oxford. (Novello.)

All the painted petals shattered,
  Soiled and crushed beneath my feet,
All the rosy sunbeams scattered
  Which made youth and love so sweet.

But those blossoms, reft of beauty,
  Strewn along my orchard walk,
Sweetly having done their duty,
  As they die, of Autumn talk;
What though now the branches o'er me
  Wear a sad and sober green,
Still there shines a hope before me,
  Life's fair fruit shall yet be seen!

ON A STATUETTE OF THE CHILD JESUS

AMONG CORN AND GRAPES.

Amid the Vine's red fruit and golden corn,
See where the sweet child Jesus smiling plays;
His small right hand a wheaten sceptre sways,
While his left hand the clustered grapes adorn.
His face is pure and fresh as breath of morn,
And like a star He scatters gentle rays;
With loveliness He crowns the sinless days
To which for our salvation He was born.
Too soon I see Him like "a corn of wheat,"
Drooping and fallen to the thankless ground;
Too soon alas! like purple clusters sweet
Rude-crushed, and shedding precious drops around;
But still where Bread and Wine divinely meet,
His glorious strength and cheering grace are found!

THE WILD STRAWBERRY FLOWER.

The snowdrop with its drooping head,
Pure as the snow around it spread,
And smiling on its wintry bed,
Has many a lover:
And dear to all the violet too,
Of virgin white or purple hue,
Sweetening the air which wanders through
Its leafy cover.

The matchless lily-of-the-vale,
Fragrant as fair, with joy we hail,
In thickets where the nightingale
Is rarely singing;
Amidst the painted flowers 'tis seen,
In sylvan nooks, a glorious queen,
With crown of pearl and robe of green
And sweet bells ringing.

Adorned with a less radiant dower,
But dear to me, there comes a flower,
When verdure flushes bush and bower
And birds are merry;
It comes in unassuming vest,
With no alluring sweetness blest,
Of no conspicuous charm possest,
The wild-strawberry.

It spreads its mantling leaves in sight
On wayside banks, and lifts to light
Its little blossoms plain but white
And pure as any;
Meekly it creeps along the ground—
But some day soon there will be found
Through its leaves gleaming, berries round
And red and many.

A tempting banquet to the eye
Of birds that hop and flutter nigh,

Or children that go loitering by
Their fingers staining:
While other flowers, the snowdrop fair,
The violet sweet, the lily rare,
Of summer feast afford no share—
No fruit remaining.

High gifts to others I resign
And worldly glories; be it mine
In gracious offices to shine
And duties lowly;
And when earth's flowers with sun and rain
Are faded, may my fruit remain—
A happy life not lived in vain
And memory holy.

ON THE PICTURE BY DELAROCHE

OF

THE VIRGIN MARY LOOKING THROUGH A WINDOW AT THE CROSS—WHICH IS UNDEPICTED.

Awe-struck she gazes through an open space
Or lattice, at that mystery of woe,
Which Art abashed attempts not here to show:
But every tragic circumstance we trace
Reflected in the anguish of her face.
The sight, unseen by us, we darkly know
From those affrighted eyes, that form bent low,
On which the last rays fall of sinking Grace.
Thus through Faith's lattice as I daily gaze
On that sad Vision veiled from worldly eyes,
May the Great Sight control my words and ways,
And all my life transform and solemnize;
That eyes which see not Him may see in me
Some reflex of the saving Tragedy!

MORNING.

Blithely the pretty milkmaid trips along,
  Bright as the dew and buoyant as the morning;
Blithely the birds pour forth their matin song,
  With painted plumes the verdurous trees adorning.

Blithely the plough-boy whistles at the plough,
  As with strong hand he turns the shining furrow;
Happy as bird that whistles on the bough,
  For there is joy in labour that is thorough.

In field or tree, where'er we turn the eye,
  This breezy morning, there is life and motion;
A fleet of clouds is flitting briskly by,
  Like snowy sails across an azure ocean.

The morning is for work, we seem to hear,
As to the busy nesting birds we listen;
This is no time for idleness, 'tis clear,
While myriad dancing leaves above us glisten.

Life, eager life, we see in Nature's face,
An energy for work in all her features;
And the great Mother's likeness we can trace
Repeated in the humblest of her creatures.

Nay, from the light which shines on Nature's brow
A faint reflection of God's face we gather;
And to the Law of life our being bow
Since without ceasing "worketh" the Great "Father."

The Law of life for holy ones above
As for earth's sojourners is happy labour;
Our highest privilege by works of love
To serve our God and benefit our neighbour.

This is the royal Law we learn below,
In the bright morning of our Life's duration:
This is the fruitful gratitude we owe
The Giver of an infinite salvation.

Are we then working in our proper place,
However humble our appointed duty?
Does eager industry light up our face,
Such as lends village-maid her rosy beauty?

Is our hand laid on the laborious plough
In our allotted field, with purpose steady?
And do we toil with sweat of brain or brow—
For each good word or work assigned us, ready?

Do we, like Summer clouds that float aloft,
And comfort with their coolness the parched meadow,
Bring with us showers of consolation soft,
Or benediction of a healing shadow?

Does gratitude, as of the singing bird,
To our great Maker's praise attune our voices?
And is the dancing of our spirits heard
As when at morn the fluttering branch rejoices?

Oh, let us work for God while it is day,
Nor relegate our duty to the morrow,
But wisely seize the smiling morning ray
And thus escape the mists of evening sorrow.

So shall we hear the wonderful "Well done"
Crowning the labour of earth's finished story:
So shall we see with joy the face of One
Who is the "Morning Star" of Heavenly glory!

GOOD FRIDAY EVENING;

OR,

THE SUMMIT OF CALVARY.

(After Mr. P. R. Morris's picture in the Royal Academy.)

'Twas the calm evening of that dreadful day
When our Salvation was so dearly won:
No darkness now veils the descending sun;
Doves' silver wings turn gold in the last ray,
Circling the fatal Tree: while drawn that way
By a strange sympathy, lambs do not shun
The crimsoned precincts where the deed was done
Which rolled the cloud of human guilt away.
At that Tree's foot let me be daily found,
Washing my robes in precious drops Divine;
While in the glorious rays that stream around,
Those robes like gold or lustrous silver shine;
Till through the dying Lamb and brooding Dove
My soul is fashioned to God's perfect love!

AUTUMN LEAVES.

Where elms and beeches fading burn
  Like sunset clouds in gold attire,
Let me the solemn lesson learn
  Taught by their thousand tongues of fire.

These reddening leaves, hark, how they sigh
  And whisper a pathetic tale—
One last sad dirge before they die
  And float upon the evening gale.

How brief their sylvan joys have been,
  How quickly flown their Summer day,
Since first they donned their vernal green
  And fluttered in the pride of May.

While to bird-music sweetly strung
The merry dancing leaves kept time;
For hope was bright and life was young,
And Nature revelled in her prime.

From glistening buds to branches sere
How swiftly have the seasons sped;
How fleet the footsteps of the year,
How soon its radiant hope is dead.

And we upon the wrinkled palm
Of the brown leaf our fortune read;
That transient is the Summer calm,
And Winter blasts will come with speed.

"We all do fade" e'en "as a leaf,"
Our hold on life soon torn away;
Oh, let us seize earth's moment brief
To win Heaven's wreaths which ne'er decay.

ON SEEING SOME LEAVES FALLING IN THE SUNSHINE.

The end of the Just in these leaves we see,
Not torn reluctant from the tree,
When the gusts of midnight rave;
But kissed by the zephyr's gentle breath
They float in sunshine to the grave
And die a radiant death.

HOME AT LAST.

(On seeing Mr. Luard's beautiful painting.)

Ah, what means that outstretched finger?
What that eager, wistful gaze?
Why do those brave soldiers linger
Peering at the distant haze?

What has warmed their pallid faces
With an unaccustomed glow,
Smoothing, hiding pain's sad traces—
Furrows of War's various woe?

Is it from the sunrise yonder
They have caught that happy gleam?
Is it coloured clouds they ponder,
Morning's gold and crimson beam?

No, it is the welcome whiteness
Of dear England's nearing shore;
And their faces take a brightness
From beholding Home once more.

How they love the very breezes
Which come whispering out to sea;
How the wandering land-bird pleases,
Telling of green field and tree.

Oh, what happiness surprises
  Those brave hearts in view of Home,
While the white cliff slowly rises,
  Shining o'er the mist and foam!

We are drawing nearer, nearer
  To our Home, as years glide by:
Does that heavenly shore grow dearer
  To our longing heart and eye?

Have we shown a soldier's bearing
  In life's long and painful fight—
Duties, hardships bravely sharing,
  As in our great Captain's sight?

Do we prize each whispered token,
  Breathing of the land above,
And each wingèd message spoken
  From the God of grace and love?

Soon Heaven's walls sublime and glorious
Shall surprise our raptured eye,
And, at last, through Christ victorious,
We shall gain our Home on high!

THE AVENUE OF YEWS.

In a dim avenue of ancient yews
I love to muse,
Their interlacing branches o'er my head
Roof-like outspread,
As in the sylvan cloister to and fro
Wander at early morn my footsteps slow.

Between the massy columns of the trees
A constant breeze
Wavers, and rubies twinkle, as I pass,
Upon the grass,
Dropt from the aged boughs, on which are seen
Myriads of berries blushing through the green.

Month after month the fruit grows red and sweet,
From Summer heat
To Winter frost—and strewn upon the ground
Each morn is found,
While birds with fluttering wing and twittering voice
Make all the solemn avenue rejoice.

For centuries have stood those yew-trees grand,
And still may stand
For centuries, and in their pillared shade
A path be made
By feet of generations yet unborn,
For whom will fall fresh rubies morn by morn.

Thus in that group of yew-trees evergreen
A type is seen
Of holy men, the pillars of God's Word,
By heaven's breath stirred,
Who wrote of old the healing leaves divine,
Where promises more bright than rubies shine.

And daily in this whispering colonnade,
This vocal shade,
Of Holy Scripture I delight to walk,
And hear God talk,
And meditate on many a promise sweet,
Like precious rubies scattered at my feet.

And as these trees of life a blessing bore
For saints of yore,
So when long years from each familiar place
Our steps efface,
To these "old paths" our children shall repair,
God's voice to hear and find fresh rubies there!

BIBLE SONNETS—MOSES.

THE EARLY LIFE OF MOSES.

Amidst long rushes on the river's brink
Rocked in his floating cradle Moses slept,
While round the helpless babe the waters crept,
Then as if awe-struck backward seemed to shrink;
Not all Nile's floods that destined child could sink:
Soon to the shore the heaven-led princess stept,
And found the ark, when lo! the sweet "babe wept,"
As though of life's rough waves wearied to think.
By care Divine thus rescued from the water,
Taught all the wisdom of that famous land,
He lived the princely son of Pharaoh's daughter:
For those whom God for some high purpose uses
He takes from earliest childhood by the hand,
And every helpful influence wisely chooses.

THE MIDDLE LIFE OF MOSES.

Ere Moses could the prison-doors unlock
Where Israel long in iron bondage lay,
On the green slopes beneath old Horeb grey
A lonely shepherd he must feed his flock;
There sitting in the shade of some great rock
Mark the swift eagle darting on its prey,
Or watch the forkèd lightnings fiercely play,
And listen to the awful thunder-shock.
Thus 'mid the peaceful scenes of pastoral life,
Or sterner sights of mountain solitude,
He spent long years in holy contemplation;
To brace his spirit for that arduous strife
With Israel's foes, and provocations rude
Of God's own ransomed but rebellious nation.

"THE SONG OF MOSES AND THE LAMB."

A song of triumph burst from the safe shore
And o'er the hushed Red Sea went floating slow—
O'er glassy waves tinged with dawn's crimson glow.
The myriad foe had sunk to rise no more,
And the wild, whirling billows ceased to roar;
Nor had the shining waters aught to show
Of war-horse or of chariot whelmed below,
But sparkled in the sunrise as of yore.
So when on Faith's high shore my soul has stood
And viewed the radiant sea of love divine,
Its waters crimsoned with redeeming blood,
And drowning all those myriad sins of mine,
An echo of that song has tuned my tongue,
Which by the "sea of glass" in heaven is sung.

MARAH.

When Israel sat by Marah's wells and sighed,
A mystic tree to Moses was revealed,
Whereby the bitter-tasting streams were healed,
And all the murmuring camp was satisfied.
Alas! from age to age, and far and wide,
Earth's weary plains their frequent Marahs yield;
For all some fount of sorrow is unsealed,
While in these pilgrim-tents our souls abide.
If on my march to-day, or if to-morrow,
Some painful Marah is prepared for me,
Let me not murmur, Lord, but seek to borrow
Sure leaves of healing from the wondrous Tree;
There is a sweetness in the bitterest sorrow,
If shadowed in its depths Thy Cross we see!

ELIM.

At Elim with its whispering grove of palm,
And clustered wells in cool abundance springing,
Israel encamped—their sighs exchanged for singing,
And Marah's murmurs for a gladsome psalm.
Earth has its Elims still of shadowy calm—
Sweet homes, with gentle vines about them clinging,
And olive branches green—young voices ringing,
And tried affection breathing grateful balm.
Lord, if such love makes glad, such beauty graces,
The desert tracts thy people tread below—
Such wells of comfort cheer earth's resting-places,
Such pleasant shades relieve the way we go,—
That heavenly land itself, how passing fair,
How passing sweet the home that waits us there!

THE MANNA.

How richly in the desert Israel fared,
By God's own hand with food angelic fed,
Which with the dew around the camp was shed.
That other dew, brow-drenching, they were spared
In tilling thorn-cursed ground—sad burden shared
By all for Adam's sin; but ate their "bread,"
As from a table in the desert spread,
"Without their labour," or their thought, "prepared."
So God's salvation, the true bread from heaven,
In rich completeness is before us set,
Fresh with the Spirit's dew, and freely given:
But not without the labour of Another,
Toils, tears, and thorny crown, and bloody sweat,
Of Him who is God's Fellow and man's Brother.

THE SMITTEN ROCK.

Out of the smitten rock on Horeb grey
  Bursts a white waterfall, glad signal waving,
  Then glides a river down the valley, laving
The lips and limbs of myriads on its way.
For us a Rock was smitten, to allay
  With living water our immortal craving,
  And with its ceaseless current pure and saving,
To wash our sin-stained souls from day to day.
May I behold that stream beside me flowing,
  As through the desert stray my pilgrim feet,
With pleasant flowers upon its borders growing,
  And from its peaceful waves a whisper sweet;
While to the Rock once riven for me I raise
The faint beginnings of eternal praise.

THE BATTLE OF REPHIDIM.

Darkly the battle fluctuates to and fro,
While, on the mount, uplifted hands of prayer
Diffuse a halo of calm radiance there,
The "noise of war" resounding far below:
As when on some high peak, with lingering glow,
The sunset sits enthroned serene and fair,
While rolling mists obscure the lower air,
And darkling streams with voice of thunder flow.
Lord, I would climb each day prayer's shining height,
And draw with lifted hands Thy blessing down,
My sword to prosper in the strenuous fight,
My arm to strengthen for the victor's crown;
In life's stern warfare sword and arm may fail,
But backed by faith and prayer they must prevail.

MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI.

Even Moses with exceeding fear was bowed
  When in the midst of lurid lightning-flashes,
  And quick, reverberating thunder-crashes,
God gave His law from the tempestuous cloud;
Israel below witnessed, with spirits cowed,
  The sight tremendous, while the whirlwind lashes
  The mountain-peaks, and down the earthquake dashes
The toppling crags—'mid blasts of trumpet loud.
Oh! as we ponder on that scene appalling,
  When God from Sinai spoke His holy law,
Like Moses on our faces humbling falling,
  We feel and own our guilt with trembling awe,
But soon we hear a voice from Calvary, calling
  Our eyes to see what Moses never saw.

THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

When, 'mid the dying camp, uplifted high
  The fiery serpent glittered on the pole,
  The serpent-stricken people were made whole
By looking to that sign athwart the sky.
So, when in fatal folds of sin we lie,
  The sight of Christ uplifted will control
  The mortal poison, and the happy soul
For one believing look shall never die.
Ready to perish, by the "old serpent" bitten,
  I turn to Thee, Lord, lifted on the Tree;
What though my sins are legion, it is written
  That Thou, the Sinless, wast made sin for me,
And I, with mingled joy and sorrow smitten,
  Stand looking with one lifelong look to Thee.

MOSES' WISH.

Moses with longing heart the Lord besought
That he might cross and see that goodly land,
And cedared Lebanon's snow-capt summits grand,
And the rich vales with milk and honey fraught.
One passionate word turned all his prayers to nought:
Enough for him, by sin shut out, to stand
On Pisgah's topmost peak, by Jordan's strand,
Whence eyes undimm'd the far-off landscape caught.
Through anger fell the man most famed for meekness,
And the great Lawgiver himself was taught,
By losing Canaan, the Law's utter weakness;
That we might lean on Christ the "meek and lowly,"
And through His merits, not our works, be brought
To walk heaven's plains, and taste its pleasures holy.

MOSES' DEATH.

On Pisgah's top he stood,—"his eye not dim"
Through length of years, "nor natural force abated,"—
Gazing on that good land, with look unsated,
From the near palm-trees to the horizon's rim;
Till when the fading landscape seemed to swim
Mistily as to traveller's eyes belated,
He sank into the arms of God, who waited
With everlasting love to comfort him.
So sometimes still the saint beholds when dying
Heaven's white-robed multitude with waving palm,—
In pauses of his pain and weary sighing
He hears the echo of their full-voiced psalm,—
Then sweetly on his Saviour's love relying,
He falls asleep in an ineffable calm.

THE SPEEDWELL.

By footpath green or parched highway
It spreads its wreaths, and throws a ray
Of heavenly hope upon the day,
The heart beguiling;
"God speed thee, friend!" it seems to say
With countenance smiling.

So brightly blue its azure eye,
It looks like tiny bits of sky
Dropt from the sapphire throne on high,
Love's message-bearers—
Like angels round the path they lie
Of poor wayfarers;

Who toiling onward with slow pace,
See at their feet a cheerful face
Upraised—reflecting Heaven's own grace—
And courage gather,
Unshaken confidence to place
In God their Father.

For He who arched yon azure sky,
And holds the golden sun on high,
In wayside flowers is no less nigh,
Their petals painting;
He made the stars—nor passes by
The weak and fainting.

As onward through the world we go,
May we too like the Speedwell throw
Around our path a genial glow
Of heart affection,
And by our gracious bearing show
Heaven's true reflection.

Nor let us shun the dust and glare,
But bravely bear, and help to bear
Life's heat and burden anywhere
For God and Duty,
And men shall own the likeness fair
Of heavenly beauty.

MARY MAGDALEN AT THE CROSS.

With her clasped hands upraised against the wood
Stained by His blood,
Beneath the Saviour's piercèd feet she knelt
And weeping felt
The sprinkled drops from that ensanguined Tree
Where JESUS hung to set the sinner free.

'Mid darkness deep the glory from His face
Illumed the place,
And showed her anguished eyes uplifted there,
And golden hair,

Which once had wiped the drenching tears away
From His dear feet upon a happier day.

Unutterable love and sorrow now
Sate on her brow,
As for her sins He gave His precious blood,
A cleansing flood:
Down from His outstretched hands and thorn-crowned head
The mighty ransom, drop by drop was shed.

Lord, be it mine beneath Thy Cross to kneel,
And daily feel
The tenderness of gratitude and grief;
And find relief
From haunting fears that on the conscience rise
In presence of the Glorious Sacrifice.

And when the changing winds of Error blow
Men to and fro;

As ivy clings to the sustaining tree
May I to Thee
Cling evermore, O Lord, and safe abide,
Clasping in life and death the Crucified!

OUR DARLING LITTLE ONE;

OR,

THE ROSEBUD AND THE NESTLING.

A smiling rosebud, bright with dew,
Its crimson petals peeping through
Green fringe, to captivate our view:

Will it in fulness of its bloom,
The pleasant garden-ground illume,
And load the air with rich perfume?

Or will its beauty quick depart,
Pining away with secret smart,
A hidden canker at the heart?

Will its fair robes and jewelled crown
Enjoy a Summer day's renown,
Or unregarded flutter down?

Will storms or sunshine on it wait?
Will it be early plucked, or late?
Ah, who can tell that rosebud's fate?

It questions not, but only smiles,
And with its fascinating wiles
The present happy hour beguiles.

Ah, Lord, OUR Rosebud shield from harm
With shadow of Thine unseen arm,
Circling around him like a charm.

The Spirit's light be on his head,
The Spirit's breath around him shed,
His heart by Thy sweet dew be fed.

Bid him in peace unfold his flower,
His beauty ripening hour by hour,
The joy and glory of our bower.

Oh, leave him, Lord, to cheer our eyes,
And breathe a life's pure sacrifice—
Then—let him bloom in Paradise!

A nestling perched upon its nest,
The tender down of its fair breast
Against the mossy cushion prest:

Will it upborne on pinions strong
Flit to and fro the Summer long,
And fill the woodland with its song?

Or will it quickly be laid low,
Struck down by instantaneous blow
Of prowling foot or wingèd foe?

Will listening leaves, around it stirred,
Applauses wave, whene'er 'tis heard,
Or will it droop, a voiceless bird?

Will it be blown o'er rock and foam,
Or in our sheltered copses roam,
The favourite of some English home?

It questions not the when or how
Of its short life, but happy now
Essays a flight to the next bough.

Ah, Lord, OUR Nestling shield from harm;
Ward off with Thine encircling arm
The lightest footstep of alarm!

Oh, let Thy Dove with holy wing
Watch over him, o'ershadowing,
And teach him there to sit and sing.

Bid him in peace spread out his plume,
And with his grace our hearts illume,
And with his voice dispel our gloom.

Oh, leave him, Lord, on earth to cheer
Our soul with song, and please Thine ear;
Then—let him sing through Heaven's long year!

SHELLS FROM GENNESARET.

A few curved, fragile shells,
Fresh from the marge of Galilee's blue lake—
Ah, what sweet echoes haunt their tiny cells,
And gracious thoughts awake.

What sacred memories crowd
Round the deserted beach from whence they came;
The lonely hills and tideless waves wax loud,
Murmuring One mighty Name.

Shells such as these once lay
Where footsteps more than mortal paced the shore;
Deemed worthy to be scattered in His way
Who strewed with stars Heaven's floor.

Shells such as these once met
The pressure of His rare Humanity,
When on dry land those glorious feet He set
Which trode the heaving sea.

'T was theirs again to hail
Those blessèd steps ere now they soared above—
To kiss the dear marks of each piercing nail
Which rent the feet of Love.

I look on them and know
That as these orient shells now fill my hand,
Their Maker eighteen hundred years ago
Stood on that hallowed strand.

And, like Gennesaret's shells,
I too would grow familiar with His feet,
Would haunt the regions where His Presence dwells
And see His tokens sweet.

Till, through His grace divine,
I gain some humble nook on Heaven's high shore,
Where His feet wander, and His glories shine,
And His redeemed adore!

A PLEA FOR THE SEA-BIRDS.*

Stay now thine hand!
Proclaim not man's dominion
Over God's works by strewing rocks and sand
With sea-birds' blood-stain'd plume and broken pinion.

Oh, stay thine hand!
Spend not thy days of leisure
In scattering death along the peaceful strand,
For very wantonness, or pride, or pleasure.

For bird's sake, spare!
Leave it in happy motion
To wheel its easy circles through the air,
Or rest and rock upon the shining ocean.

* Published in "The Times," Oct. 15, 1868.

For man's sake, spare!
Leave him this "thing of beauty"
To glance and glide before him everywhere,
And throw a gleam on after-days of duty.

For God's sake, spare!
He notes each sea-bird falling,
And in Creation's groans marks its sad share—
Its dying cry—for retribution calling.

Oh, stay thine hand!
Cease from this useless slaughter—
For though kind Nature from the rocks and sand
Washes the stains each day with briny water;—

Yet on thine hand,
Raised against God's fair creature,
Beware lest there be found a crimson brand
Indelible by any force of Nature.

THE FLAMBOROUGH PILOTS.

The lights revolve, now white, now red,
In vain—no warning ray is shed
From mist-enfolded Flamborough Head.

In vain the gun booms on the shore—
No warning sound is wafted o'er
The waves that to the darkness roar.

To straining eye and listening ear,
In heaven or earth no signs appear,
Whereby bewildered bark may steer.

But suddenly a voice is heard,
The wailing note of wild sea-bird,
And all the sailor's heart is stirred.

"The Flamborough Pilots!" is his cry,
Beware—beware—the rocks are nigh,
Turn the ship's head, and seaward fly.

Blest birds—kind white-winged pilots—hark
Like angels call they through the dark,
Like angels save that helpless bark.

'Tis morn—the mists are rolled away—
The beacon lights are quenched in day—
And boats come stealing round the bay.

The rocks with deadly echoes ring
From rifles that destruction bring
To angel-voice and angel-wing.

Oh, cruel sound! Oh, piteous sight!
The gentle pilots of the night
Are murdered with the morning light.

And lo! for lack of warning call
Ships lost beneath that white sea-wall,
Where now the "Flamborough Pilots" fall!

A PLEA FOR CAGED BIRDS.

Oh, set them free!
Kind-hearted man have pity
On the poor Cage-birds, snatched from hedge, or tree,
Or open field, to pine in smoky city.

Set the birds free;
Their joy is in the meadows,
At will to wander with the murmuring bee,
Or sit and sing amid the happy shadows.

What right hast thou
To lure the golden finches,
Or the red linnets, from the wildwood bough,
And cage them within bars of six square inches?

Who gives thee leave
To steal the merry thrushes
From breezy fir-tree tops, that they may grieve
In silence, where the loud street-traffic rushes?

Whence comes thy right
To cramp the free-born pinion
Of soaring larks that sing unseen in light,
Then earthwards drop—to feel man's harsh dominion?

Set the birds free,
To smooth the ruffled feather,
To flit at liberty o'er wood and lea,
Bathe in blue skies and drink the sunny weather.

Oh, set them free!
See them once more upspringing
Into the open with a cry of glee—
With ecstasy their Maker's praises singing!

THE SMALL BIRDS' APPEAL.

All day we flit across your view,
  Brown, black, and crimson breasted,
Yellow and blue, and speckled hue,
  Purple and golden crested.

We do our best to please your eye,
  With colours brightly blending;
With fairy motion gliding by,
  Or angel-like ascending.

All day we strive to charm your ear
  With concert of sweet singing;
And even when the stars appear
  We keep the copses ringing.

At times we waken in your heart
  A thrill of soft emotion,

And into world-worn spirits dart
An impulse of devotion.

Faithful we stay the Winter through,
Although the snow storms bluster,
And trusting you, since we are true,
Around your homes we cluster.

Or if we fly the North wind's sway,
Soon as the Spring is blooming,
Back o'er the sea we wing our way—
We know our time of coming.

We warble forth our music sweet,
We twitter, chirp, and chatter,
Or one poor note all day repeat—
It is our best, no matter!

Or if we cease our songs—to do
The duties Life imposes,—
Insects from flowers we clear for you,
The canker from the roses.

We guard the growth of tree and wood,
Or soon their grace would wither;
Seeking our food on leaf and bud,
Still flitting hither, thither.

Oh, spare our useful, happy life
The voice and form which charm you;
And wage not an unnatural strife
With birds that cannot harm you.

The dainty colours of our coat
Stain not with bloody rifle,
Nor the sweet note from merry throat
In dusty darkness stifle!

Our Maker, be it ne'er forgot,
Appoints the birds man's teachers;
Oh, silence not, with murderous shot,
God's careless, tuneful creatures!

"GIVE ME A DRINK;"

OR,

THE THIRSTY DOG'S PETITION.

Who could behold the motto on his neck
To the chance stranger silently appealing,
Or look into his countenance, and check
The loving action and the tender feeling?

Furnished with such a passport kind and wise,
Friend after friend provides the noble creature
With water for his thirst, while from his eyes
Thanks overflow, and from each speaking feature.

Ah, if we saw that touching prayer for drink
Plainly round other thirsty throats suspended,
Would our much-suffering flocks and cattle sink
Along the public ways all unbefriended?

Hour after hour, in the hot dusty lane,
Would the dumb sheep or ox attract no pity?
And would their patient eyes appeal in vain
From iron railroad, or from stone-paved city?

Thirst! There is One above who knows that pang:
"Give me to drink," He said to Sychar's daughter;
And from His lips a sad "I thirst!" once rang
When He man's victim was, and had no water.

Touched with the feeling of His creature's grief,
The mighty Maker listens to their groaning;
Shall we deny them water for relief,
And man alone be heedless of their moaning?

THE NUNBURNHOLME ROBIN;

OR,

THE TAME ROBIN IN THE GROUNDS OF NUNBURNHOLME RECTORY, THE RESIDENCE OF THE REV. F. O. MORRIS, AUTHOR OF "BRITISH BIRDS."

The pastoral garden nook
Of green Nunburnholme,—village known to fame,—
Spreads its gay flowers beside a shining brook,
A beck* without a name;

Which, with swift-flowing tide,
Is sweetly heard to ripple and to rush
Past pleasant bowers, where birds may safely hide
Their nests in tree and bush,

* "Beck," in Yorkshire and the north of England, is the common word for a small stream.

Or to observant eyes,
Display their painted plumage in the sun,
Or sing unseen, fearing no base surprise
Of net and ruthless gun.

Emboldened by the air
Of calm security which breathes around
The winding garden-walks and flower-beds fair
Within that sheltered bound;

One bird, a Robin dear,
Ere yet his breast had warmed into a flame,
Learnt by degrees to lay aside all fear
And answer to his name.

Trusting the voice and eyes
Of gentle patroness—her name is Rose—
At her first call now from his bower he flies;
Robin his Mistress knows!

Perched on her finger-tips
In the full splendour of his Winter vest,
For the soft crumbs his nut-brown head he dips—
Redder than rose his breast!

Then flitting to a spray
That overhangs the streamlet's verdant banks,
He sings his loving mistress a sweet lay
Of happy heart-felt thanks.

Thus Robin, morn by morn,
Waits for her call, and takes her offered hand:
Favoured his lot—a rose without a thorn—
A wonder in the land!

And long may Robin live
Safe from the prowling cat and swooping hawk
Such daily happiness to feel and give—
Brightening that garden-walk.

And oh! that far and wide
The birds and beasts could share the gentle charm,
And their instinctive terror lay aside,
And love supplant alarm.

Would that the garden ground
Of mutual kindness might enlarge its range,
Its peaceful pleasures with the ocean bound,
And earth to Eden change!

BIRDS WAITING FOR BREAKFAST.

Icy breath of Winter pinches
Birds upon the leafless bough,
Sparrows, thrushes, titmice, finches,
Who will bring them succour now?

Drooping beak and ruffled feather,
Hungry looks they cast below,

Sitting huddled up together
O'er their tablecloth of snow.

How it glitters in its whiteness—
Every morning newly-spread;
How it mocks them with its brightness,
Snowy table, but no bread.

Not an insect or a berry,
Hip or haw is seen around,
Not a worm to make them merry,
Not a grain of corn is found.

Eye and ear, they look and listen
Opposite the window pane
Where the beams of sunrise glisten—
Till the sash is raised again.

Soon their little friends will muster
In the cheerful breakfast room,

At the window soon will cluster
Girls and boys in rosy bloom.

Birds fly down and hop and hover
For they see their breakfast comes,
As on that white table cover
Loving hands throw showers of crumbs.

Then, while birds their bounty gather,
Rosy cheeks and curly head
Bend and pray to God their Father,
"Give us, Lord, our daily bread!"

THE CANARY.

FOR MY CHILDREN.

The pet Canary in its gilded cage,
Hung safely in the bright and curtained room
Sings a sweet song and smooths its yellow plume,
By kind hands fed and fondled to old age.
But those poor birds outside my thoughts engage—
Nor birds alone—how different is their doom;
Through all these bitter days of wintry gloom
Exposed to cold and rain and tempest's rage.
For bird or child 'tis easy to look pretty,
In happy home well-sheltered and well-fed,
Easy to smile, or sing a pleasant ditty;
But oh! remember through this wintry weather
Children without a home or daily bread,
And pity Robin with the ruffled feather!

SAMUEL.

(After seeing Mr. Sant's picture.)

Why that look of wondering awe?
  Why that posture of surprise?
What the glory that he saw?
  Whose the form that filled his eyes?
Nearer through the dark it came,
And it called him by his name.

On the child's attentive ear,
  Through the stillness, slowly fell
Accents musical and clear,
  Twice repeated—Samuel!
And the colour left his cheek,
As he answered, Speak, Lord, speak!

See him innocent as fair,
  Sitting on his lowly bed,
Gazing on God's glory there,
  Drinking in the words He said.
As the Lord, in mercy mild,
Communed with a little child;

Who about the holy place,
  In a linen coat arrayed,
Year by year had grown in grace,
  "Ministered," and watched, and prayed;
Far removed from mother dear,
But to God his Father near.

Thus a living sacrifice,
  He upon God's altar lay;
Prayer and praise by night arise,
  Works of love are done by day;
Till the Lord from heaven came down,
A child's piety to crown!

Children, He is still the same—
  Nay, the Lord has died for you;
And He knows you each by name,
  And He sees whate'er you do;
When you kneel beside your bed,
He is standing at your head.

Still a "child" may "minister"
  To the mighty God above,
By obedience and by prayer,
  And by self-denying love:
Still to children He is kind,
And "who seek Him early, find."

And when life's bright day is o'er,
  And death seals our weary eyes,
We shall open them once more
  With a glorious surprise,
To see Jesus face to face,
Full of majesty and grace!

BIBLE SONNETS.—DAVID.

THE ANOINTING OF DAVID.

As Jesse's sons, in manhood's pride, passed by,
Of princely stature and of martial air,
The prophet deemed the Lord's anointed there.
But not the grace that charms the outward eye,
Grace in the heart, is prized above the sky,—
Found in yon vale, contented with the care
Of "those few sheep," and waking music rare
From lute or harp to lift God's praise on high.
Called from the sheep-fold, circled by the seven,
See for the anointing that fair stripling bow,
Then rise their destined king by will of Heaven:
So to Christ's humble, happy followers now,
A secret unction from above is given,
Pledge of the crown which shall adorn their brow.

DAVID AND GOLIATH.

He lays his mantle by, and shepherd's crook,
And dons the cumbrous armour of the king—
One moment—then resumes his well-proved sling,
And simple pebbles rounded by the brook:
On wings of faith and prayer the "smooth stone" took
Its fatal flight urged by the circling string,
And the prone giant's shield and helmet ring
Hollow, and earth at his loud downfall shook.
So with one promise from the Sacred Pages
The streams whereof make glad the Church below—
One text worn smooth by use of rolling ages,
Our soul's strong enemy we overthrow;
Faith in God's Word the help of God engages,
And "It is written" puts to flight the foe.

DAVID THE WANDERER.

The victim of a despot's jealous mood
From Court luxurious to drear cave he fled,
Nor had he where to lay his weary head—
A wanderer in the wilderness and wood.
'Twas Love allured him into solitude,
Ordering each flitting step, each tear he shed,
And through rough paths His chosen servant led,
With thorns and briars to teach him for his good.
For the high duties of a dazzling throne
The Lord with sufferings His elect one braces:
Thus in deep furrows of God's plough are sown
The precious germs of fair, immortal graces;
And still by arduous ways God leads His own
To sit on starry thrones in heavenly places.

DAVID IN ADULLAM.

Hid in Adullam's "dry and thirsty" cave,
Longing he cried—faint with fierce harvest heat—
"Oh for a draught from Bethlehem's fountain sweet,
Which, by the gate, wells out its cooling wave!"
Bursting through hosts of foes three warriors brave
Present the brimming cup—his wish complete—
Which, as with life-blood crimsoned, at his feet
He pours, refusing his parched lips to lave.
So, by Heaven's gate, I see pure waters streaming,
And, faint and weary, long to drink of them;
For that blest fountain, clear as crystal seeming,
Gladly earth's broken cisterns I contemn;—
I see the crimson through the crystal gleaming,
Dear "water of the well of Bethlehem!"

DAVID THE TRANSGRESSOR.

Silence had fallen on the minstrel-king,
And melancholy brooded o'er his throne;
Out of his palace gates God's peace had flown—
No heart had he to pray or tongue to sing:
In vain he longed for some air-cleaving wing
To waft him far away to desert lone;
Sadly he reaps what he had madly sown—
Sin has no Harvest-sheaves of joy to bring.
Alas! one touch of guilty hands had jarr'd
The harp that thrill'd to many a holy psalm;
The shadow of one sin had shut and barr'd
The windows whence flowed down heaven's sunshine calm,
And like a canker or a blight had marr'd
The gracious verdure of earth's stateliest palm.

DAVID THE FATHER.

"Oh my son Absalom, my son, my son!
Would I had died for thee!" Thus up the stair
Above the gate he groaned in his despair
At tidings of that fatal victory won;
All the dark deeds which Absalom had done
Merged in sweet memories of his countenance fair;
The father's heart entangled in that hair,
Whose golden sheen outvied the orient sun.
Rebel, undutiful, ingrate, unkind,
All was forgotten in that one word—Child;
The father's eyes with tears of love were blind.
So we, God's rebel children, sin-defiled,
Round our Great Father's pitiful heart entwined,
By yearning, dying Love are reconciled.

BIBLE WORKMEN;

OR, THE DIGNITY OF LABOUR.

Adam as a workman wrought,
When the breath of golden hours,
With delicious odours fraught,
Wandered through fair Eden's bowers;
Work for holy hands was found
In that happy pleasure-ground.

Noah as a workman wrought,
When the ark rose huge and high,
And by word and sign he taught
Sinful men God's wrath to fly;
Heavily the hammers fell,
Sounding forth earth's solemn knell.

JOSEPH as a workman wrought,
When, abandoned of his own,
Into slavery he was bought,
Into prison he was thrown;
Faithful, watchful, he endured,
And a glorious name secured.

MOSES as a workman wrought,
When, a shepherd, year by year
Jethro's flock he fed, and brought
To the slopes of Horeb drear;
Till upon that lonely height
He beheld God's glory bright.

DAVID as a workman wrought,
When he fashioned harp and lute
For God's praise, and bravely caught
By his beard the tawny brute—
Guarding, guiding "those few sheep"
Which were given him to keep.

PETER as a workman wrought
On the sea with net and hook,
Casting oftentimes for nought
Till the astonished fisher took
One fair Pearl of mighty worth,
Brightest gem of heaven or earth.

PAUL, too, as a workman wrought,
Weaving tents with his own hands,
While the Gospel-fight he fought—
Preaching JESUS in all lands:
First he wove the goat-hair, then
Wielded inspiration's pen.

JESUS as a workman wrought:
What the name He deigned to bear
When our sinful souls He sought?
"Is not this the Carpenter?"
Days of labour, nights of prayer
For His last sad hour prepare.

Hast thou as a workman wrought?
Dost thou toil with hand or brain—
Wearing labour, wasting thought?
Prayerful work is not in vain:
And since JESUS toiled and died
Labour has been glorified!

DAVID PLAYING THE HARP BEFORE SAUL;

OR, MUSIC THE WORKING-MAN'S RESOURCE.

The shepherd's harp rare music yields,
Soothing dark soul and troubled looks;
It whispers of the happy fields,
It warbles of the running brooks.

It points to yonder pastures green
Where flocks repose in perfect peace,
Till charmed with that delightful scene
The monarch's wayward fancies cease.

The king upon his royal seat
Bows to the shepherd's "cunning" hand;
His ear is touched by harpings sweet,
His soul by airs celestial fanned.

For mixed with music many a word
Of heavenly comfort wins his heart:
And thoughts of love once more are stirred,
And evil thoughts awhile depart.

Blest melodies! ah, not in vain
That shepherd youth, through lonely days
Had tuned his harp to that high strain,
And woke his "glory" to God's praise.

Behold him in his leafy bower
While listening flocks around him lie,
To his harp singing, hour by hour,
Psalms that still echo from the sky.

His harp made daily work more sweet,
  His work gave subjects for his song;
And not less active were his feet
  For music, nor his hands less strong.

O glad resource for leisure time,
  Soothing the spirit through the ear,
Lifting the heart to thoughts sublime,
  And making home itself more dear.

When will such harmonies resound
  'Neath every workman's cherished roof?
Token that peace at home is found,
  And jarring discords hold aloof.

Dear solace of a blameless life,
  At evening when his work is done,
And near him stands his loving wife,
  Or gentle girl or prattling son.

His skilful hand awakes the notes
Of some familiar, sacred air,
And through the quiet room there floats
The cheerful voice of praise or prayer.

Oh, happy "days of heaven on earth,"
Brightened with music and with love,
Sure earnest of melodious mirth
In our Great Father's House above!

"STAND UP FOR YOUR SUNDAYS."

A WORD FOR OLD AND YOUNG.

Stand up for your Sundays; let nothing have power
To take from God's children their birthright and dower,
The rest-day appointed in Eden's fair bower
Ere sin had yet clouded earth's glad morning hour.

Stand up for your Sundays, the Sabbath of rest,
God's solemn commandment from Sinai's crest,
When awed by the thunder, by darkness opprest,
Their sin and their weakness His people confest.

Stand up for your Sundays; the Saviour arose
In triumph on Sunday, and scattered your foes,
His labours all ended, and borne all His woes,
That you might have pardon and faith's sweet repose.

Stand up for your Sundays; the Spirit came down
On Sunday, and gave it a gladsome renown;
On calm Christian Sabbaths no thunder-clouds frown;
Grace, peace, and rejoicing are Sunday's bright crown.

Stand up for your Sundays; earth's business and care
In six weary work-days have more than their share;
Then comes the blest Sabbath: of labour beware
Which steals from the rest-day to which you are heir.

Stand up for your Sundays; of pleasure take heed
Which seeks from God's worship your footsteps to lead:
Oh, pause, Sabbath-breaker, that flower is a weed
Which stings as you pluck it and bears deadly seed.

Stand up for your Sundays, the earnest and sign
Of "rest" that "remaineth" in mansions divine;
With streaks of heaven's glory our Sabbaths now shine,
Some grapes they now yield us from Eshcol's rich vine.

Stand up for your Sundays; these happy Lord's-days
On wings as of eagles your souls shall upraise,
While faith's joyful worship and hope's cheering lays
Ring in the grand Sabbath and thunders of praise!

CHRISTMAS PRAISE FOR HARVEST PLENTY.

The year with all its mercies will soon have fled away,
The bells will soon ring welcome once more to New Year's day;
But ere the old year vanish into the silent Past,
Let us o'er its fair seasons our grateful glances cast:

And while Spring's shoots and blossoms, and Summer's azure skies,
And Autumn's golden bounty, before our memory rise,
Reflect how cheery Winter to every season owes
Some tint of the bright garland which crowns his Christmas snows.

The gleaming showers of April, the genial warmth of June,
The tender frosts of August beneath the mellowing moon,

Their various powers combining—we see our table spread
With Christmas-tide abundance, God's precious gift of Bread.

We catch the pleasant ripple from fields of yellow grain,
We see the loaded waggon come rumbling down the lane,
The sound of happy voices from rural homes is heard,
Blessing the God of harvest, who keeps his plighted Word.

And round our Christmas fireside we join the general praise,
And to the great Creator adoring thanks we raise,
Who gives us harvest, seed-time, cold, heat, and night, and day,
The Summer and the Winter, till earth shall pass away.

Old men and little children, husband and gentle wife,
Praise God for a good harvest, for bread, the staff of life,

Praise God for strength to labour, and for the boon
of health,
And for the pearl contentment, earth's most enduring
wealth.

And let the bells of Christmas, as merrily they ring,
Feelings more high and holy to Christian bosoms bring.
Since on this happy morning, long since, to men was
given
Another gift more precious—the Bread which came
from Heaven.

He came to us in Winter, a white-robed Babe, to show
The garment He would weave us, fairer than driven
snow:
He felt the drought of Summer, and a more scorching
heat,
Which upon Calvary ripened the drooping "Corn of
Wheat."

He bought for us the comforts of cheerful Christmas-
tide
With slowly paid out rubies from brow and hands and
side:
More costly far than silver, or gold, or precious stones,
One drop of that dear ransom which for our sin atones.

As with the joy of Harvest we joy this happy morn,
To us is given a Saviour, to us a Child is born:
We are like men rejoicing when they divide the spoil—
Heaven's jewel decks yon manger, Heaven's joy ends
earth's long toil.

Is ours the plenteous harvest? Oh, let us spare a sheaf
For those who pine with hunger, or sit in lonely grief:
And is the spoil celestial in our possession found?
Oh, let us share the treasure with all our brethren round.

Has God given us abundance of earthly, heavenly,
Bread?
He points us to the needy, desiring to be fed:

And as our hands we open, He gives us more and more,
And as our hoards we lessen, He multiplies our store!

BETWEEN THE YEARS;

OR,

THOUGHTS FOR THE OLD YEAR AND THE NEW.

My soul, look inward and REFLECT;
The solemn midnight hour draws near;
Let worldly thoughts and words be checked;
Watch thou beside the dying year:
Pause, ere this milestone is quite past,
And ponder—it may be thy last!

REFLECT how days, weeks, months glide by,
How soon life's journey will be done,
And we must lay us down and die—
Life's silent-flowing sands all run:

Who knows how few may now remain!
Let us not waste one precious grain.

My soul, look backward and REPENT;
  Count up thy sins of deed, word, thought,
Talents misused, and time mis-spent,
  Duties neglected, follies wrought:
Bid all stand forth in dark array
Ere the Old Year has passed away.

REPENT; confess them then and there,
  Daring to look them in the face;
Then take them all to Christ in prayer,
  And leave them at His throne of grace;
"His own self bare them on the Tree,"
And we begin the New Year free!

My soul, look upward and REJOICE;
  Crossing the threshold of the year

With music of a grateful voice,
  With comfort of a conscience clear:
To God thy heart-felt praises lift
For His unutterable gift!

Rejoice, for all His paths are peace,
  Daily His acts of kindness flow
Throughout the year, and never cease;
  Count up thy mercies here below—
Then in each joy a token see
Of higher joys prepared for thee.

My soul, look forward, and resolve
  That by God's blessing thou wilt win,
Ere yet another year revolve,
  More conquests over self and sin;
More love for duty and for God,
More peace within, more strength abroad.

Resolve to read God's Word and pray;
To seek the Spirit's living power;
To fill with useful work each day;
And lean on Christ from hour to hour:
Lord, to Thy servant be Thou near,
And this will be a glad New Year!

TEARS FOR WAR'S MISERIES.

Jesus from Olivet beheld Jerusalem outspread,
And paused amid the shouting crowd, and tears of pity shed;
For situation beautiful, the joy of the whole earth,
Its temple and its palaces awoke in him no mirth.

He saw its temple wrapt in flames, its palaces laid low,
Its children slain by fire and sword, its streets with blood o'erflow:

What though the Roman eagle yet in its far aerie slept,
He saw it swooping down in wrath,—and o'er the city wept.

Those tears to us are eloquent of that most tender Love
Which on our dreadful battle-fields now looks from heaven above:
They teach us what our Maker feels, when men by myriads die,
Though o'er the crimsoned earth is spread a smiling, azure sky.

Those tears to us are eloquent how deeply we should mourn,
When thousands of our brethren lie by ball and bayonet torn;
When men in God's own image formed are smashed by shot and shell,
And earth for man made beautiful, by man is made a hell.

Oh, weep we for that Widow lone o'erwhelmed by sudden woe—
The clinging Vine robbed of its elm by War's disastrous blow;
The cup of joy dashed from her lips, ne'er to be quaffed again;
Her Maker be her Husband now, for human help is vain.

Those orphan children claim our tears, launched on the waves of life,
No pilot wise to steer their course through rocks with danger rife:
That farewell kiss so bitter-sweet still lingers on their lips;
Alas! the light of their glad home is quenched in black eclipse.

Oh, pity we the cottagers flying from War's alarms,
Wandering in woods with aged folk, and wife, and babe in arms:

The reaper Death is in their fields, piling up heaps of slain,
Their vineyards yield strange fruit this year, and of a deeper stain.

Alas! for the brave officers and for their soldiers brave,
Who climb a hill of fire to find death and a nameless grave;
While shells are bursting o'er their heads and bullets round them shower,
Who can describe the wild despair of that appalling hour?

Oh, weep we for the wounded men struck down in the fierce fight,
Abandoned to their wretchedness through the long, chilling night;
Consumed with fever and with thirst, tortured with racking pain,
They call aloud for pity's hand, too oft, alas! in vain.

Oh, let us give them more than tears; not tears alone
He gave,
Who paid a ransom-price in blood the perishing to save;
So let us turn our tears to gold to succour the distrest,
Our sighs to prayers that parting souls through JESUS
may be blest.

Nor will the soldier's friend refuse a thought for the
poor steed,
Which helps the soldier's victories and shares his direst
need;
Which feels the suffering that he feels without the hope
he knows:
Alas! that War should thus drag down dumb creatures
in its woes!

'Tis night—the moon is rising pale—and War has
hushed his din;
You see him in his nakedness, and shudder at the sin:

Thick lie the dead; and dying men groan out their
latest breath,
While friends with foes are now made one in agony and
death.

O sight to make the angels weep, and cloud the Saviour's
brow—
The same to-day as yesterday, on Olivet as now—
Can these destroyers Christians be, named with that
gracious Name,
Who roar their hate from cannon's mouth and breathe
devouring flame?

Is Love the law which binds men still before their
Maker's sight?
Is hatred in one Christian wrong, but in a Nation right?
Is murder of one human being accounted heinous guilt,
And is it glory if the blood of multitudes is spilt?

If Nations differ must they needs plunge into deadly hate?

May not kind Counsel intervene, and Wisdom arbitrate?

Have we no worthier arguments than powder, shell, and shot?

Is Reason dead, and must the sword still cut the Gordian knot?

"Glory to God and peace on earth!" was once the angels' strain;

Oh, may the cry of "Glorious War" be never heard again:

Come, Thou Desire of nations, come; return, O Prince of peace,

Put forth Thy mighty power and reign; bid war and bloodshed cease!

NOTE.—An "English M.P.," who was present at the battle of Sedan, ministering to the wounded and dying, thus writes to the *Times*: "How grateful they were! How polite in the midst of all his sufferings one poor French soldier! And most touching of all, how kindly helpful the poor fellows were to one another, French and German alike! 'But, monsieur,' asked one poor Frenchman, 'are the Prussians Christians?' 'Certainly,' said I. I knew he was thinking of those heathen Turcos of his. 'Then,' said my poor friend, breathing heavily (he was badly wounded in the chest), 'why do we kill one another?'"

ON THE LAUNCH OF "THE BRITISH WORKMAN" LIFE-BOAT.

Blue the sky, and still the ocean,
Not a shadow on its breast,
Softest murmur, gentlest motion,
Wind and water lulled to rest;
Every outward sign denoted
That the Lord His blessing gave,
When our Life-boat smoothly floated
On the bosom of the wave.

Prayer from many a voice ascending
Had been heard upon the shore;
With it far-off wishes blending
From the hearts of thousands more:

"Guard our Life-boat from the dangers
Which in storm and darkness lurk,
Bless it, Lord, to shipwrecked strangers,
Prosper Thou our handiwork!"

Then by noble lips was spoken
O'er the boat its chosen name;
"British Workman" be the token
Of the kindness whence it came:
While religious hands deliver,
As for royal Christening meet,
Water from the sacred river
Which once bathed those Blessèd Feet.

When the sky is dark and clouded,
And the fearful breakers roar,
And the sea with mist is shrouded,
And the billows beat the shore,

May our Life-boat, as a saviour,
  Walk upon the stormy wave,
And with calm, sublime behaviour
  Snatch the lost from watery grave.

Oh, while Life is round us smiling,
  Ocean smooth, and weather fair,
Pleasure's voice our hearts beguiling—
  Let us for the storm prepare;
That when Death's dark tempest rages
  We may find a refuge dear
In the appointed Ark of ages—
  Safe and blest with JESUS near!

THE CROWN OF ENGLAND;

OR,

KING JOHN RECEIVING BACK HIS CROWN AFTER PROMISING TO PAY TRIBUTE OF A THOUSAND MARKS A YEAR.

The royal crown of England had fallen very low,
Dimmed was its ancient glory and many-jewelled glow,
When John, the unworthy tyrant, stooped from a foreign hand
To hold the jurisdiction over his own free land.

The king was weak and friendless, his enemies were strong;
The hearts of all his people estranged by years of wrong;
And in an evil moment his kingdom to retain
He tarnished his crown royal with a disgraceful stain.

Was this the crown his brother, the Lion-hearted, wore?
Whose fame the valiant Richard to the far Orient bore?
The crown which bold crusaders had lately seen to shine
The hope of banded armies in holy Palestine?

But England's royal symbol was soon itself again;
Our Edwards and our Henries wiped off the transient stain;
And many an added jewel on England's crown was seen
Ere, handed down through ages, it rested on our Queen.

Since great King Alfred wore it a thousand years have fled.
How has that rim of glory pressed many an aching head;
Uneasy lie the temples ordained to wear a crown,
And hands which bear a sceptre, how often they hang down!

Within that golden circlet what cares have made their nest,
What anxious thoughts have fluttered and banished peaceful rest:
The jewelled crown may glitter and captivate the eye,
But ah! 'tis sadly conscious of many a secret sigh.

Let not the people envy their sovereign's diadem;
The burden is the monarch's, the benefit for them:
The joys of equal friendship from royalty are hid,
The solitary topstone which crowns the pyramid!

The crown is the expression of a great people's power,
Its chosen head and mouth-piece to meet the current hour;
The crown in all its glory reflects the people's might,
The lofty source and symbol of justice and of right.

As God has made the mountains to tower above the plains,
As o'er the circling planets the sun unmoving reigns,
So let the lawful monarch above the people rise,
And spread through all his kingdom the order of the skies.

While still the crown remembers its power is held in trust,
And that its highest glory is to be wise and just,
And its most precious jewel the people's loyal love—
Honouring their earthly monarch and fearing God above.*

* "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king."—*St. Peter.*

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. * * * Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."—*St. Paul.*

"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's."—*The Lord Jesus Christ.*

Oh, what a cheering lustre that love has lately shed
Within a darkened chamber whence hope itself had fled:
What earnest prayers it prompted the sinking Prince to save—
Prayers which prevailed to snatch him a trophy from the grave.

Long may the people cherish such feelings to the throne;
Long may the Crown of England such gentle influence own;
Which knits a loyal nation like ivy round a tree,
And stamps our Queen the Mother of one great family!

ON THE SICKNESS AND HAPPY RECOVERY OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES.

(See Acts xii. 1-17.)

The nation's hope, he lay
Bound with two chains, fever and labouring breath,
In prison of sick room, from day to day
Waiting the call of Death.

But, for him, everywhere,
Unceasing supplications rose to God:
The Church's voice was lifted up in prayer,
Like Moses' mighty rod.

And not the Church alone,
But Hebrew synagogue and heathen fane
Mingle their intercessions at God's throne
In one harmonious strain.

With our belovèd Queen,
The whole world watches round the Prince's bed;
Not the less there because they stand unseen,
Or move with noiseless tread.

For Science never ceased
The trembling tidings of the hour to bring;
Flashing the longed-for words from west to east,
As on the lightning's wing.

Nay, for a purpose higher
Science must lend her unaccustomed aid,
And pour a people's prayers along the wire;
Religion's meek handmaid.

But still that precious life
Beneath the impending sword of Death was kept;
While Church and people, mother, sister, wife,
Waited and prayed and wept.

And now the fatal hour,
Dark with a father's death, was drawing nigh;
The shadows of the day began to lower—
The day that he must die!

When lo! that very night,
As Hope herself had stretched her wings and fled,
An angel glided down, arrayed in light,
And stood beside his bed;

And stooping, spoke one word.
The chains were loosed; the sickness was allayed;
A people's supplications had been heard,
The hand of Death was stayed.

Prayer brought that angel down,—
Not science, riches, power, but prayer alone,—
To save the sinking heir of England's crown,
And strengthen England's throne.

Ah! why, ten years ago,
Did that kind angel his swift flight delay?
Were men incredulous of such a blow,
Nor stirred themselves to pray?

But now let prayer to praise,
Like weeping clouds to sunny skies, give place;
Let a glad nation grateful anthems raise
For God's abounding grace.

And may that rescued life,
Like his great father's, to high thoughts allied,
Shine ever with all princely virtues rife,
A loyal people's pride!

THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING DAY.

Radiant with happy smiles
Passes our Queen through that amazing throng,
Borne on her people's billowy shouts for miles
Triumphantly along.

As with one mighty voice
Millions of throats are thundering to the skies,
Millions of hearts, beating like one, rejoice
With joy that mists the eyes.

Mother as well as Queen,
Her people's love enfolds her like the air,
While at her side her royal Son is seen—
Given to a nation's prayer.

To render God due thanks
The Queen and all her people are intent;
A burst of gratitude that blends all ranks
Goes up with one consent.

No temple made with hands
That mighty congregation could contain;
But now the Queen, for the whole nation, stands
In Britain's grandest fane.

Beneath the dome and cross
Which o'er the city's smoke shine forth serene,
Lifting men's hearts from thoughts of gain and loss—
Kneels our all-honoured Queen.

And round about her kneel
Children and children's children, a fair band,
And thousands who in love like children feel—
The noblest of the land.

A nation joins in praise
As late a nation knelt in fervent prayer,
Nor knelt in vain; for now their thanks they raise,
Seeing the answer there!

Then let the organ pour
Its loudest notes, and let the swelling hymn
Be sung by thousands, whose full hearts run o'er
And eyes with gladness brim.

And may this joyful hour
Knit faster a great people to the throne;
And bind them both to that All-Gracious Power
Whose mercy now they own!

BIBLE SONNETS.—SOLOMON.

SOLOMON'S REQUEST.

"Ask what thou wilt and I will give it thee."
"Lord, give me wisdom!" was the rare reply,
Rising more grateful to the silent sky
Than smoke of thousand holocausts could be.
Then fell a voice—"Since thou hast asked of me
The crown and queen of blessings, wisdom high,
Not riches, or long life, or victory,
Wisdom is thine; and thou shalt also see
Life, riches, honour following in her train."
So still the greater comprehends the less:
Celestial wisdom is earth's truest gain:
Wisdom is grace; Lord, let thy grace be given,
And happiness my mortal days shall bless,
And light my footsteps to the gates of heaven.

SOLOMON'S WISDOM.

Not only for high uses which belong
To kings, or private solace of his mind,
Or delectation of all human kind
With thoughtful proverb and with holy song,
Was wisdom giv'n; but that the goodly throng
Of creatures might a royal scholar find—
Beasts, reptiles, fish, birds borne on wave or wind,
And plants from hyssop frail to cedar strong.
May I in God's least works high purpose see,
And with intelligent observance greet
Each careless bird that flits from tree to tree,
Each thriftless flower that sheds its incense sweet
About my path. Thus be it given to me
To find true wisdom scattered at my feet.

SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

Bright as a vision, silent as a thought,
Slowly ascending cloud-like to the skies,
Drawn heavenwards by soft warblings faintly caught
From lips angelic, see yon temple rise—
God's glorious house of prayer and sacrifice—
Gold, marble, cedar curiously wrought,
The fair creation of that monarch wise
Whose mind capacious was divinely taught.
A grander temple now, unseen, is growing,
The bright and undecaying home of Grace,
Its living stones from every country flowing
And from all time. Oh! when that temple holy
Appears in perfect beauty, may a place
Be found for me and for my service lowly!

SOLOMON'S GLORY.

Seated upon a throne superb and high
Of ivory, with finest gold inlaid—
Crowned with a blaze of jewels, and arrayed
In robes magnificent of Tyrian dye,
The king "in all his glory" strikes the eye
With wonder—from amidst luxurious shade
Of purple canopy, and proud parade
Of couchant lions keeping watch hard by.
But all that royal pomp the palm must yield,
In texture rare and beauty of array,
To roses wild and lilies of the field,
Which bloom and perish in a single day:
Lord, if the flowers are decked in robes so fair,
What clothing shall Thy saints in glory wear?

CATHEDRAL SERVICE.

Here let me worship God where pillars rise
In towering loftiness, and arching meet,
Centring on God above our wandering eyes;
Where Art and Nature blend in union sweet,
And leaves and flowers in many a quaint conceit
Garland the roof with sylvan traceries;
Hither would I resort with willing feet,
To render God a worthy sacrifice:—
Hither, where cunning hands in glass have striven
To shadow forth with pencil-beams of light,
And colours deep and rich the Gospel-story;
Where music thrills us with a strange delight,
Lifting with harmony our souls to Heaven,
And waking echoes from the hills of glory!

THE GLEANER AND CHILD.

Up and down the Gleaner strays
Through the corn-field, meekly stooping,
While beneath her arm she lays
Ear by ear in fulness drooping.

Single stalks soon make a sheaf
With her busy feet and fingers;
Respite from her work is brief,
Only for a kiss she lingers.

Thus she toils through mid-day heat
Far into the evening breezy,
Gathering ears of golden wheat—
Love makes labour light and easy.

Home she wends at twilight grey,
Joyful burden with her bringing,
While with thanks she cheers the way,
Praises to her Saviour singing.

We are Gleaners in life's field:
One short day sums up life's story;
Humble toil blest sheaves will yield;
Efforts small win golden glory.

Have we found the "Corn of wheat"
From the hills where once Ruth wander'd,
And where angel voices sweet
Sang the song which Mary ponder'd?

Souls for Jesus—"line on line"
Seek we, "small things not despising?"
Selfish ease do we resign,
Works of usefulness devising?

Then our patient noon-day toil
  Christ's own smile of love will lighten;
And at eve, glad harvest spoil
  Our way home to God will brighten.

HOMEWARD.*

The curtains close not, let the light
Be poured upon the deepening night;
Let fire and lamp with ruddy glow
Across the dusk a welcome throw;
That homeward eyes may all the way
Rejoice in the alluring ray,
And homeward footsteps from afar
May hasten tow'rds that evening star!

*Set to music by Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, Bart. (Novello.)

The curtains close, and let the gloom
Be banished from our happy room,
While soothing touch of child and wife
Removes the dust of toil and strife;
And infantile caress and kiss
Make the full heart o'erflow with bliss;
And pleasant talk and sunny smile
Those evening hours with love beguile.

In toilsome ways of earth we roam
With faces tow'rds our far-off Home,
Drawn onward by the cheering gleams
Of light which from its glory streams:
Our faithful footsteps shall not miss
Those mansions of repose and bliss,
That Home secure in heaven above,
Those greetings of eternal Love!

THE SHADOW ON THE WALL.

In childish joy, fresh from her mother's kiss,
She dances with the light upon her face,
Love in each look, and in each motion grace:
But something in that charmèd scene, I wis,
To eyes which fondly watch her is amiss:
Ah, on the lighted wall through tears they trace
A shadow dancing in that happy place
As the child dances—mocking at her bliss.
From burdened heart there bursts a sad "Alas!
The shadow comes with life's new-risen day,
Until night deepens nevermore to pass:
Oh, if but He as closely by her stay,
Who loves the little ones, and puts to flight
All mortal shadows with His conquering light!"

THE STAR.

As in the light uncertain
Of a dim lamp I lay,
Betwixt the blind and curtain
A star shot in its ray.

Bright as a silver arrow,
All in a moment seen,
It filled the opening narrow
With a white, twinkling sheen.

A few quick gleams it darted
Into my shadowed room,
Then on its way departed,
And left me in the gloom.

Too soon the star had drifted
  Across that narrow line,
But yet in passing lifted
  My soul as with a sign.

A smile of God seemed sweetly
  Upon my spirit shed
In blessing, and then fleetly
  To other watchers sped.

A touch of tenderest lustre
  Caught from an angel's wing,
Revealed the seraph-cluster
  Who guard us in a ring.

A gleam of Heaven's own brightness
  Pierced through our clouded air
To hint the pearly whiteness
  Of yonder City fair.

A ray of dazzling beauty
Fell from the crown of life—
Guerdon of love and duty
And victory in the strife.

Thus in the night-watch dreary
A momentary star
Flashed me a message cheery
From happy realms afar!

THE JOURNEY TO EMMAUS.

"Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?"—*St. Luke* xxiv. 24.

Sad was the disciples' walk
O'er a sorrow-clouded way,
Full of doubts and fears their talk,
That mysterious Easter-day;
When the Lord "Himself drew near,"
All perplexities to clear.

From some silent olive-shade,
  Or some grove of pillared palm,
Gently His approach He made,
  With kind voice and aspect calm;
Asking, "Why so sad to-day,
As ye commune by the way?"

"Know'st thou not," they said, "the things
  Which all Palestine have stirred
And with which Jerusalem rings?"
  "What things?" asked He, that the word
To disciples' heart most dear
Might salute the Master's ear.

Now their gloom to brightness turned
  When the Lord began to speak;
And each heart with comfort burned,
  And with happiness each cheek;
Hills and meadows seemed to smile
And look lovelier mile by mile.

When the Lord "Himself drew near"
  Soon they felt their sorrow cease;
Shades of evening disappear
  In the light of inward peace;
As their Master walked between—
All unknown though not unseen.

So whenever love's soft glow
  Warms our heart in praise or prayer,
By that sign we surely know
  That the Lord Himself is there;
Chilling doubts before Him melt—
All unseen though not unfelt.

When our way is sad and lone,
  And our comforts small and few,
And the landmarks are not known,
  Or a mist obscures the view,—
If our sky begins to clear,
'Tis because the Lord draws near.

What though now He sits above,
Wielding His dominion wide,
Still His Name pronounced in love
Draws him quickly to our side;
And His presence we discern
When our hearts within us burn!

THE CLUSTER.

"Where's the cluster—
The taste of our inheritance?"
GEORGE HERBERT'S *Bunch of Grapes.*

Sing of the purple cluster
Of wondrous growth and sunny lustre,
Which Joshua took from Eshcol's brook,
Where pendulous it gleamed and tremulous it shook,
And like a bell with gentle swell
Invited him to rest in that delicious dell.

About that purple cluster
No stormy wind could rudely bluster;
Thick trees all round a covert wound,
And sheltering hills enclosed the flower-enamelled ground;
No noonday heat could fiercely beat
The odoriferous bowers of that secure retreat.

About that purple cluster
The birds in chorus sweet would muster;
And from each tree came songs of glee,
While murmuring Eshcol joined the sylvan minstrelsy;
And airs of balm at evening calm
Played with the tendrilled vine and stirred the tufted palm.

Hail to the goodly cluster
Welcome its sunny lustre,
Earnest of fruitful vines by Eshcol growing—
Pledge of blest fields with milk and honey flowing:

Borne on a staff between the faithful Two
Through all the camp for Israel to view:
With glad surprise and gleaming eyes
They gaze upon the purple prize:
A moment, while they look,
Eshcol's sweet bowery nook
In all its loveliness before them lies:—
A moment they rejoice
At Joshua's stirring voice,
"Behold the cluster; brethren, let us rise,
And take the land
At God's command,
'T is ours, behold the earnest in our hand!
Around your standards muster,
Follow the goodly cluster,
Bright fields and happy homes lurk in its purple lustre!"

Sing of the HEAVENLY cluster
The Spirit's grace and cheering lustre,
Which JESUS brought for those He sought

Thirty long painful years with toil and sorrow fraught;
In pity sweet, through cold and heat,
And many thousand miles upon His weary feet.*

Sing of the Blessèd Spirit
Pledge of the joys which saints inherit;
The graces fair which here they wear
Assure them they shall shine in pure celestial air;
In part they know ev'n here below
The bliss of that good land, its beauty and its glow.

Thanks for this precious token
That all is true the Lord has spoken!
A holy rest pervades each breast
Which welcomes from above the Spirit for its Guest—
An earnest dear vouchsafed ev'n here
Of Heaven's unfading bowers and living waters clear.

* "Christ, God and Man, sought man's soul lost through sin, thirty years and more, with great travail and weariness, and many thousand miles upon His feet, in great cold and storm and tempest."—JOHN WYCLIF.

Hail to the Heavenly cluster,
Welcome its cheering lustre,
Pledge we shall one day see the True Vine growing
By Heaven's pure stream of life like crystal flowing—
That drooping Vine once lifted on the Tree
Without the camp for Israel to see:
With heavy sighs and weeping eyes
Men saw the purple Sacrifice!
But soon the Spirit came
In the Redeemer's name
To lure and lead us upward to the skies;
On earth a soothing balm
Pledge of eternal calm.
Hark how the voice of Jesus bids us rise
And claim the Rest,
By all possest
Who feel the Spirit's earnest in their breast.
Faint hearts, your courage muster,
Cherish Heaven's precious cluster,
Your bright eternal Home lies hidden in its lustre!

THE LAMBS IN THE CHURCHYARD.

Beside the porch, amid the graves,
The happy lambs repose or play,
Where ivy round the dial waves,
And texts adorn the headstones grey.

What though the circling hours may speed,
And dust of ages sleep below,
Those happy lambs no shadows heed,
Nor feel a pang, nor fear a woe.

Sweet, living parable of peace,
Which points to that enclosure blest,
Where worldly cares for ever cease,
And weary hearts for ever rest.

Time casts no fleeting shadow there,
  Nor sin disturbs the tranquil scene;
In Heaven the skies are always fair,
  The fields of bliss are all serene.

Would we those peaceful pastures gain
  And in that blest enclosure dwell,
To sin, and to sin's shadow, pain,
  Bidding a long and glad farewell?

Then we must trust His holy Name,
  And we must plead His precious Blood,
Who like a Lamb Himself became,
  And meekly as our Surety stood.

SIGNS IN THE SKY.

We take the paragraph, one of the most suggestive and one of the saddest we ever read, from the leading columns of the *New York Tribune*:—"Signs in the sky. A religious paper publishes a curious appeal in the following words. It is asked of all newspapers desiring the spread of truth and the destruction of error, that they publish this request and prayer to Almighty Power, that on the three first Sunday nights in October, 1871, there shall appear in the heavens a distinct light in the shape of a great cross."—*Spectator*, quoted in the *Rock*, Aug. 25, 1871.

Alas! does such a cry
In this late age appeal to Power Divine,
"Let a great cross illume the evening sky,
Show us, O Lord, a sign!"

"For Thine own truth's sake, hear;
Thrice in the hush of autumn's twilight calm,
Oh, let a cross distinct in heaven appear,
After the Sabbath psalm."

O vain and sinful prayer,
Powerless to wing its flight to the high stars,
Or pierce the clouds which in this lower air
Extend their fleecy bars.

"Deeply" of old "He sighed,"
When doubters asked Him for a sign from heaven;
A shadow dimmed His brow as He replied,
"There shall no sign be given."*

Lord, we do not require
A miracle inscribed upon the sky,
On the blue silent heavens a cross of fire,
A wonder hung on high.

Enough that on the face
Of ancient records we may clearly see
Thy cross of wood "without the gate," and trace
The saving mystery.

* Mark viii. 11, 12; compare Matt. xvi. 1—4.

Enough that we may know
By solid proofs no unbelief can shake,
That Thou for us didst sleep in death below,
And gloriously awake!

Enough that we may feel
Thy resurrection's power within our breast,
The Spirit's comfort and attesting seal
Of endless life and rest.

Then let the sky be dark
And rolling vapours shroud each Sabbath eve:
We proffer not vain hands to help God's ark;
We know Whom we believe!

RESURRECTION TYPES;

OR,

NATURE'S HINTS OF IMMORTALITY.

An emerald beechen-leaf,
Bursting the sheath which fenced from frost and snow,
Dances through Summer days, untouched by grief,
The sapphire skies below.

A dewy violet-flower,
Drawn sunwards from its root in the dank earth,
Scatters sweet odours on the shining hour
Of the Spring's bounteous birth.

A painted butterfly,
Which lately from its cell of darkness came,
Now sips the nectared cups, and soars on high,
A wingèd flower, or flame.

A fair, melodious bird,
Which slumbered once within its silent shell,
Poised in the blue is seen, or sweetly heard
Its ceaseless praise to tell.

An ear of drooping gold,
Sprung from a grain that fell to earth and died,
Now lifts to light its increase manifold—
Existence multiplied.

The purple-clustered fruit
Luxuriant hangs on the low-creeping vine;
And from rough, withered stalks are seen to shoot
Streams of heart-cheering wine.

A mighty-branchèd tree,
That wrapt within a buried acorn lay,
Adds century to rolling century,
And dreams not of decay.

Thus in green leaf and flower,
In insect and in bird, in corn, grape, tree,
I see foreshadowed my own glorious dower
Of immortality.

If from its Winter sheath
The leaf escapes in vernal airs to wave,
God will not overlook His child beneath
The cerements of the grave.

If flowers burst forth in bloom
And fragrance; and if earth-bound insects soar
In life and happiness, for me the tomb
Shall open wide its door.

If from its dusky shell
The bird emerges into life and bliss
And music, in dim silence shall I dwell
And Heaven's glad anthems miss?

Though like a corn I die,
Like the green blade I shall revive again;
And God's new life my powers shall multiply—
Death turned to golden gain.

Made one with the True Vine,
My fruit shall be abundant, gladdening, sure;
And married to eternal Strength Divine,
In bliss I shall endure.

Let me but now be found
Trusting the Love which this sad earth has trod,
Then shall my deathless germ spring from the ground,
And claim its home with God!

THE SHADOW OF A CAGED BIRD IN A LIGHTED WINDOW;

OR,

AN EVENING INCIDENT ON THE STAGE COACH TO CAMBRIDGE TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO.

The shadow of a bird upon the blind,
Perched in the pleasant lamplight, drew my eye,
As a dim, unknown village I passed by,
The day I left my boyhood's home behind.
Darkness had fallen, and the evening wind
Murmured a pensive echo to my sigh,
When from my dreary vantage I descry
The happy bird, against the light defined.
Of sweet domestic joy the type it seemed,
Which from my life alas! had taken wing—
But with long years returned; and I have deemed
That bird prophetic, and have heard it sing
Of dearer home-delights which now are mine
And through my window on the stranger shine!

CAMBRIDGE DAYS.*

The precious years we spent at Catharine Hall,
How dear their distant memory!—when the dew
Of youth was on us, and the unclouded blue
Above us, and Hope waved her wings o'er all.
The ancient elms, green Court, and tinkling call
Of Chapel-bell; gowns flitting o'er the view
To Hall or Lecture, even the dingy hue
Of College-front—how fondly we recall.
Our strolls in gardens or by winding river,
The famous men we heard, the books we read,
The dreams we dreamt—will make us one for ever;
Nor time nor place nor circumstance can render
Our hearts indifferent to those years long fled,
With their rich store of recollections tender.

* Addressed to my Friend, the Rev. Henry Sandwith, M.A.

While Shirley (a friend of Laud) was at Catharine Hall, Cambridge, he formed a close attachment with Bancroft, the Epigrammatist, who has recorded their friendship in the following lines, (A.D. 1635.)

"James! thou and I did spend some precious yeares
At Katherine Hall, since when we sometimes feele
In our poetick braines (as plaine appeares)
A whirling tricke, there caught from Katherine's wheele."

PRAISE THE BOND OF UNITY.*

Oh, could we catch the song,
Sung by the saints above,
Where mortal discords never wrong
The ear of "perfect love";
Praise to the Great I Am
Their one harmonious theme,
Eternal glory to the Lamb
Who suffered to redeem!

There is a peaceful height,
Amid earth's tumults found,
Where Christian tongues may now unite
Without a jarring sound—

* A special tune for this Hymn (D.S.M.) is given in "Evening Hours" for 1872, p. 312.

Praising the Great I Am,
The God of grace and love,
Ascribing glory to the Lamb,
And the all-holy Dove.

Thick mists no more divide,
On the clear top we meet,
And the blest prospect, side by side,
And "eye to eye" we greet;
We praise the Great I Am
With one united voice,
And magnify the dying Lamb,
And in His Cross rejoice.

Oh, let us climb that hill,
That happy hill of praise,
Where each discordant note is still
'Neath Love's unclouded rays;

While to the Great I Am
  Glad anthems fill the air,
And the high praises of the Lamb
  Our grateful homage share.

Our ears have heard the fame—
  Our eyes when shall they see
God's saints on earth of every name
  Dwelling in unity?
When to the Great I Am
  All lift the ceaseless breath
Of mingled "praises" through the Lamb
  Which "God inhabiteth."

'Mid praises God will dwell,
  And where He dwells is peace;
Let praise, like music, heavenward swell,
  And jarring strife will cease—

Praise to the Great I Am
  Our one harmonious theme,
Eternal glory to the Lamb
  Who suffered to redeem!

A WHITSUNTIDE HYMN.

O God, the Holy Spirit,
  If but of Thee possest;
I shall, through Christ, inherit
  The Kingdom of the blest:
If, by Thine influence o'er me,
  I am but "born again,"
An heir of grace and glory,
  I shall with Jesus reign.

Thou art the Wind that bloweth;
  With rustling of the bough
It cometh and it goeth
  We know not whence or how:

Yet one short prayer will stay Thee,
Mysterious, heavenly Breath;
To feel Thee and obey Thee,
Oh, this is life from death!

Thou art the Rain that falleth
Upon the rocky ground;
The thirsty desert calleth,
And timely dews abound:
Hear me, O Lord, addressing
Petitions to Thy throne;
Oh, send down "showers of blessing"—
Soften this heart of stone.

Thou art the Dove that glideth
Gently from heaven above;
Wherever it abideth,
Dwell peace and joy and love:

One earnest prayer will lure Thee—
Soft wing and tender voice;
Oh, let me now secure Thee,
Now make my heart rejoice.

Thou art the Fire that burneth
With bright and steady flame;
Upwards to heaven it turneth,
Telling from whence it came:
Oh, may the holy fire
My sinful thoughts refine,
Still burning clearer, higher,
Till my whole heart be Thine.

Thou art the Well that springeth
From fountains out of sight;
With murmur sweet it singeth,
Uprising day and night:

Oh, may the living fountain
  Make melody in me,
Till on God's "holy mountain"
  Its sacred source I see.

Come, waft me to that glory,
  Blest Wind, most holy Dove;
Come, shed Thine influence o'er me,
  Fountain and Fire of love;
O God, the Holy Spirit,
  Come, dwell within my breast,
Till I, through Christ, inherit
  The Kingdom of the blest!

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER.

"God be merciful to me—
Chief of sinners"—was his plea,
When God's House of prayer he sought,
Scorned by man, but Spirit-taught.

"God be merciful!"—his cry,
When not daring to draw nigh,
From afar he views the place
Where God veils His awful face.

"God be merciful!"—he sighs
With sad heart and downcast eyes,
As he smites his conscious breast
By a load of sin opprest.

"Be propitious, Lord"—his prayer,
Through the Victim pure and fair:
Thus he pleads atoning blood,
Though but dimly understood.

And we know his prayer was heard;
For "I tell you" is Christ's word,
"That man went home justified,"
For the sake of Him who died.

Humble words have pierced the sky,
Reached the throne of God on high,
Brought an instant pardon down—
Gracious pledge of glorious crown.

Let me learn that prayer to pray
Every hour of every day,
Seeking for myself to win
Sweet forgiveness of my sin.

God be merciful to me!
Christ's dear ransom set me free!
Mine the faith which justifies
Through the precious Sacrifice!

A THANKSGIVING.

My heart is now inditing
An anthem to the King,
The Spirit's voice inviting,
To Thee, O Lord, I sing:
Thy mighty love amazes
My soul yet more and more;
Fain would I utter praises
And at Thy feet adore.

The boon of my creation,
A free and sovereign gift,
And life-long preservation,
For these my thanks I lift;

A mother's soft caressings,
  A father's loving care,
And all the priceless blessings
  Which crowned a home of prayer.

For store of various knowledge,
  For training in God's fear,
Bestowed at school and college,
  Through many a favoured year:
For helpful words in season
  From lips as wise as kind,
To elevate the reason,
  And cultivate the mind.

Praise for the Spirit's calling
  Which came to me in youth,
God's early rain soft-falling,
  Quickening the seeds of Truth;

Revealing Christ the Saviour
As all my hope and stay,
And ruling my behaviour
Along the peaceful way.

For that transcendent Treasure,
That Jewel of the skies,
Whose worth no tongue can measure,
My highest praise arise,—
For that most precious story
Of Him who bled and died,
That I might live to glory
In Jesus crucified.

Praise for this world of beauty
Spread round me day by day,
And for the light of Duty
Which shines upon my way;

For chorus of birds' voices,
And, sweeter still to me,
A conscience that rejoices
Because by Truth made free.

Blue sky and sunset splendour,
Green field and garden bower,
For all, my thanks I render—
For river, tree, and flower;
For swell of mighty ocean,
For mountain's lofty crest,
For cloud with stately motion,
For lake with placid breast.

Praise for my home-enjoyments,
For friendship's grateful balm,
Each happy day's employments,
Each welcome evening's calm:

The tenderness which graces
A wife and mother true,
The joy of children's faces
Who keep their early dew.

And not of mercy only,
Of judgment will I sing,
Of hours, ah, dark and lonely
Which drooped on heavy wing,
O'ershadowing all life's gladness
With pain and grief and loss;
But Thou couldst soothe the sadness,
And sanctify the cross!

Praise for the service holy
Wherein I spend my years
In bearing to the lowly
The Gospel-wine which cheers:

An open door before me
To speak and write for God,
His promised blessing o'er me
To waft His Word abroad.

Praise for each hopeful token
I have not sown in vain,
But when His Word was spoken
He gave the "gracious rain;"
And that, though oft in sorrow
I sigh for fruitless toil;
There comes a joyful morrow
With golden harvest spoil.

Oh, praise the Lord who lightens
With peace earth's toil and strife,
And with a glory brightens
The verge of this brief life:

Who with His finger beckons
To yon fair Home above,
Where Time no longer reckons
The cycles of His love!

HYMN TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.*

Come, Holy Dove,
Descend on silent pinion,
Brood o'er my sinful soul with patient love,
Till all my being owns Thy mild dominion.

Round yon sad Tree
With frequent circles hover,
That in my glorious Surety I may see
Grace to redeem and righteousness to cover.

* Set to music by Dr. Stainer, of St. Paul's Cathedral. The tune may be found in "Evening Hours" for 1871, page 498.

On wings of peace
Bring from that precious Altar
The Blood which bids the storms of conscience cease,
And blots out all the debt of the defaulter.

Spirit of Grace,
Reveal in me my Saviour,
That I may gaze upon His mirrored Face
Till I reflect it in my whole behaviour.

Oh, let me hear
Thy soft, low voice controlling
My devious steps with intimations clear,
With comforts manifold my heart consoling.

Let that sweet sound
To holy deeds allure me,
With heavenly echoes make my spirit bound,
And of my Home in Paradise assure me.

Come, Holy Dove,
Guide me to yon bright portal,
Where I shall see the Saviour whom I love,
And enter on the joys which are immortal!

BENEATH HIS FEET.

Suggested by the lines of the Hymn

"My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine."

Not on that sacred Head of Thine,
Circled with majesty Divine,
Would I, O Lord, place hand of mine.

Here in the dust of sin I lie
And cannot lift my hand so high
To reach Thee crowned above the sky.

Not on Thy Head my hand I place
But with bowed knee and covered face
Bending before Thy throne of grace;

My head beneath Thy Feet I lay,
Thy piercèd Feet, and humbly pray
Some precious drops may fall that way.

Here, Lord, beneath Thy sacred Feet
I'll supplicate Thy pardon sweet
And linger round Thy mercy seat:

Here will I wait to hear Thee speak,
And glimpses of Thy countenance seek,
And drink into Thy Spirit meek:

Till, Lord, on this bowed head of mine,
Thou gently lay Thy hand Divine,
And bid me rise, and sing, and shine!

THE WORDS OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

PART I.

On the Cross uplifted high
Jesus hangs 'twixt earth and sky,
Left by Heaven, by earth cast out
With a cold, derisive shout—
Bearing meekly all that storm,
Visage marr'd and bruisèd form,
Arms outstretcht and thorn-crowned brow,
Owned as King of Sorrows now.

Then the Saviour's voice was heard,
"Oh, forgive them!" His first word,
As He poured from piercèd hands
Payment of the Law's demands.
Lord, forgive us; on our head
Be the blood that then was shed,

On our souls be sprinkled free
Balsam from that healing Tree!

To the sufferer at His side
Asking mercy, He replied,
"Verily, to-day with Me
Thou in Paradise shalt be."
Lord, in patience let us bear
Pain with Thee, and daily care,
Till upon our dying eyes
Gleam the palms of Paradise.

Hear Him now bespeak Love's care
For His mother standing there;
Though a world's sin broke his heart
He would do a true Son's part.
Like the Holy Child may we
Honour, in subjection see,
And with ready succour cheer
Grey hairs of our parents dear.

Lord, beneath Thy Cross we bow,
Send Thy blessing on us now;
May we learn from Thee to show
Filial piety below;
Grant to our dim earthly eyes
Some sweet glimpse of Paradise:
Let us hear Thy gracious voice
"Pardoned sinner, rise, rejoice!"

PART II.

To the darkened noonday sky
Rises a mysterious cry—
"O my God"—His piteous plea,
"Why hast Thou forsaken Me?"
Lord, Thy goodness we adore
Which for us such darkness bore,
That the light of Heaven's own day
Might illumine all our way.

Hark! a sad "I thirst" is wrung
From His patient, parchèd tongue,
While the bitter-laden reed
Mocks once more His mortal need.
Lord, Thou hast not borne in vain
Thirst, and hunger, shame, and pain;
In Thy woe our weal is found—
We have all things and abound.

Listen, Heaven and earth are stirred:
"It is finished," mighty word,
Rends the awful veil in twain,
God and man may meet again.
Lord, with boldness we draw near,
In our hands a title clear,
On our souls a garment meet,
Christ's own righteousness complete.

Then His sacred Head He bowed
And with utterance calm and loud,

"Father, unto Thee," He cried,
"I commend my soul"—and died.
Lord, we know in Whom we trust,
Thou hast formed us from the dust,
Bought us with a price Divine;
Living, dying, keep us Thine.

Lord, beneath Thy Cross we bend,
Now Thy blessing on us send;
Bid our darkness roll away,
Our immortal thirst allay,
Clothe us with Thy raiment white,
Lead us to the land of light—
From the Cross, O Lord, look down,
Raise us—fit us—for the crown!

AFTER READING "THE NEGEB,"

OR,

"SOUTH COUNTRY OF SCRIPTURE."*

Patient explorer of that ancient land
  Made holy by the pressure of His feet
  Who came to save, and filled with echoes sweet
Of solemn music waked by David's hand:
With scholarly acuteness thou hast scanned
  Each well, and brook, and path worn by the beat
  Of camel's foot, ruin, and lone retreat
On hill or plain of wandering Arab band.
Thus from thy quiet study thou hast bidden,
  As with the waving of a magic wand,
Cities arise which long in dust lay hidden;
And from the gloom profound of buried ages
  Hast summoned them as witnesses to stand
Of Truth infallible in Scripture pages.

* By my brother, the Rev. Edward Wilton, M.A., late Incumbent of Scofton, Notts., and one of the Contributors to Dr. Fairbairn's "Imperial Bible Dictionary." He died suddenly in the midst of his useful and learned labours, August 30th., 1864, aged 44 years.

BETHLEHEM.

The glory which had faded from the skies,
Nor left on cloud or grassy hill one trace,
Still shone reflected on the Virgin's face
Bent o'er the manger where her Infant lies.
Wide open are those sweet, mysterious eyes—
Divine effulgence veiled with mortal grace:
Inside that stable is earth's holiest place,
And wondering angels stoop o'er a Babe's cries.
O Lord, since Thou so mean a shelter usest,
No roof too low for such a loving Guest,
And "base things of the world" even still Thou choosest;
I have a room for Thee most dim and lowly—
Oh, let my heart become Thy chosen rest,
And with Thy presence make it bright and holy!

BETHLEHEM OFFERINGS.

The star-led Sages to the Babe draw nigh:
Before Him all their treasures are unrolled;
As to a King they offer costly gold—
As to a God they wave sweet incense high—
As to "a Man of sorrows," born to die,
Tear-dropping myrrh, prophetic, they unfold;
The while the Babe with rapture they behold,
Or at His feet, in worship, prostrate lie.
Lord, I would bring Thee "precious faith" for treasure,
"Gold tried with fire," and purer for the heat;
With praises I would fill my happy leisure,
Like fragrant incense swung beneath Thy feet;
And meekly take the cup which Thou dost measure,
"Wine mixed with myrrh," the bitter with the sweet.

NAZARETH.

Here dwelt—His glory veiled—the Son of God
For thirty years; in this enclosure green
Of Galilean hills the Power serene
Who framed the universe, and with a nod
Sent planets on their courses, meekly trod
The village street and lanes; and might be seen
Over His humble handicraft to lean,
Or pace in prayer the dewy mountain sod.
O mystery of godliness how great!
Obedience of a lifetime how complete!
Who now can murmur at his low estate,
Or who but feel the humblest duty sweet;
When "Is not this the Carpenter?" was heard
Of Him who had "built all things" with a word!

CANA IN GALILEE.

Behold in flower of manhood the True Vine
To full perfection grown from a dry ground;
Grace in His eyes and lips, He looks around
Where bride and bridegroom at the feast recline:
He hears the whisper, "Son, they have no wine"—
When lo! as if ripe clusters had been found,
And sudden crushed, the purple streams abound,
To prove the Branch that yielded them Divine.
O happy thought for bridegroom and for bride
In after ages, 'mid their innocent mirth,
That by His presence Jesus beautified
A marriage-feast, blessing all homes of earth,
Upon whose walls the fruitful vines are seen
With hopeful clusters smiling through the green.

CAPERNAUM.

How blest the "city" which was called "His own,"
The home of Jesus Christ; happy the street
Which knew the echo of His sandalled feet,
The light of His familiar face, the tone
Of His most gentle voice: happy each stone
And timber of that dwelling, which His sweet
"Peace to this house" was daily wont to greet,
When His dear shadow on the door was thrown.
Jesu, who standest knocking at my door,
Seeking a home in this poor heart of mine,
Oh, lift the latch—enter for evermore;
Here let Thy voice be heard, make Thy face shine,
And breathe Thy peace, while gratefully I sing
The love and condescension of my King.

GENNESARET.

His footsteps press not now Gennesaret's strand,
Or noiseless glide along its crystal floor;
He sleeps not now lulled by the plashing oar,
His weary brow with dewy breezes fanned.
No more the stormy wind at His command
Drops, and the obedient billows cease to roar;
Across the sea and through the dark no more
A glory looms with loving voice and hand.
But still thy name, Gennesaret, has a charm
To stay the tumult of a troubled breast:
When rising storms of Providence alarm,
I see thy waves traversed by footsteps blest—
I see a form Divine, an outstretcht arm,
And all the tossing billows sink to rest.

BETHANY.

Happy the sisters whom the Lord held dear,
To whom o'er Olivet His way He wended;
Eager they watched till His dim form ascended
Athwart the sky, and through the dusk drew near.
Love to their Lord in both hearts burning clear,
The active and contemplative were blended,
While thoughtful Mary on His Word attended,
And Martha toiled His weary frame to cheer.
Lord, I would show the gratitude I feel
By shining with a twofold consecration;
Like Martha labour with untiring zeal,
Like Mary rest in holy contemplation;
And bear about with me the Spirit's seal
Of Jesu's love and of a sure salvation!

GETHSEMANE.

'Mid shadowy olives in that garden ground
See the cold moonlight through the branches streaming
On His bowed head: no other light—no beaming
Of love Divine or human, now is found.
The voice of His "strong cries"—no other sound—
Stirs the night-air: unwatchful friends lie dreaming;
While o'er the brook yon temple towers are gleaming
Above a careless city slumber-bound.
Under God's mighty hand behold Him languish,
Crushed by the weight of our imputed guilt,
Alone and all unaided in His anguish:
While crimson drops start to His brow, in token
Of saving blood impatient to be spilt,
And sinless body eager to be broken!

JESUS LEAVING THE PRÆTORIUM.

(Suggested by Doré's picture.)

Meek but majestic He descends the stair
From the Prætorium—to Calvary bound:
Mid priests and people fluctuating round
He moves along with calm, pathetic air.
His spotless soul shines through His vesture fair,
In which no seam by keenest eyes was found;
While the sharp thorns that his smooth brow surround
With crimson points His matchless love declare.
O dearest Lord accept my adoration,
As here before Thy feet I cast me down;
And give me the white garment of salvation,
And bid me follow Thee—wearing the crown
Of patient sorrow; till I reach the height
Where thorns shall blossom into garlands bright!

CALVARY.

O darkest, saddest page in Gospel-story—
God's Lamb is dragged along the dolorous way,
Hustled by pitiless crowds, the innocent prey
Of wolf-like men—fainting, bound, bruisèd, gory.
Nailed to the Cross on that low summit hoary,
They lift Him up in sight of glaring day,
Thorns and a veil of blood His sole array—
O blessèd wreath, O precious robe of glory!
Lord, I would gaze upon Thy shame and sorrow,
Through mingled tears of gratitude and grief,
Till from Thy stripes and wounds new hope I borrow;
And on that weeping cloud of mortal sadness
I see God's bow displayed in bright relief,
Token of wrath assuaged and Gospel gladness.

OLIVET.

Hail, dearest, surest of earth's holy places!
From city-crowds the Saviour's loved retreat;
The lingering memory of His frequent feet
With lines of light thy surface interlaces.
Along thy winding paths what hallowed traces,
And 'mid thy olives, of His steps we meet;
Nor least of that last walk and farewell sweet,
Till His returning foot thy summit graces.
O'er thy calm brow the Lord would pass to borrow
Solace, where love with answering love was met;
In thy dark shadows He endured His sorrow
Even unto death, O mournful Olivet—
Which won for thee, for us, a bright to-morrow;
And now thy face, like ours, tow'rd the East is set!

THE VISTA.

The tall trees of a pleasure-ground,
With crowded boles and branches high,
To right and left my prospect bound,
And intercept the sky:

Save where amid the encircling green
A sudden vista pierces through
The umbrage, and far off is seen
The horizon's hazy blue.

There mighty Humber rolls along,
Diminished to a silver thread,
And, radiant with the light of song,
The dim wolds lift their head.*

* The Lincolnshire Wolds, visible from Londesborough across the Humber, have been made classical by the poetry of Alfred Tennyson, and of his rarely gifted brother, the Rev. Charles Tennyson Turner, Vicar of Grasby, near Brigg.

Encroaching verdure, day by day,
Would veil the view with leafy folds,
And soon, untended, steal away
The water and the wolds.

But, day by day, a watchful eye
And ready hand restrain the green,
And still yon silver stream glides by,
Yon azure hills are seen.

When worldly cares enclose me round,
And crowding duties, may I find,
And foster 'mid the narrowing bound,
A vista for the mind:

Through which the light of song may shine,
And cheer me in life's barren ways
With ancient melodies divine,
And voice of later lays:

Through which the light of Heaven may pour
From the eternal hills, that gleam
In unimagined beauty o'er
The inevitable stream.

And thus earth's cares, which gather round,
Shall not confine the mental eye
Within this narrow plot of ground,
Or quite conceal the sky:

And common duties will appear
To shine with a celestial ray,
Caught, through faith's vista, from the sphere
Of everlasting day!

THE CHURCH-TOWER AND THE BEECH-TREE.

Behind a leafy Summer screen—
A bright expanse of living green,
A glimpse of our church-tower is seen:

Only a glimpse can reach the eye
Through beechen branches broad and high—
A pinnacle against the sky.

Window and pier and all beside
The boughs of that huge beech-tree hide,
To left and right outstretching wide.

And in that green, umbrageous bower,
Which circles and conceals the tower,
Murmurs the dove in Summer hour:

And happy birds of various wing
Amongst the branches sit and sing
And make the holy echoes ring:

While Summer breezes whisper by,
And Summer sunshine floods the sky,
And all the leaves dance merrily.

We feel the touch of sylvan glee,
And gazing on the full-leaved tree
Forget the tower we do not see.

And thus in that huge beech-tree green
A symbol of the World is seen
Obscuring Heaven as with a screen—

As with a veil across the sky—
So thick that we can scarce descry
A glimmer of God's House on high;

While Pleasure's soothing voice is heard,
And sunny hours are lightly stirred
With music—as of Summer bird.

Alas! our very comforts hide
The glories of the further side—
Too soon our hearts are satisfied.

But Summer birds will cross the sea,
And Summer music silent be,
And winds will strip the great beech-tree.

Then through the branches brown and sere
Window and buttress will appear,
And day by day will show more clear;

Until the perfect tower is seen
Behind the rent, transparent screen—
No muffling leaves to intervene.

So when Earth's wingèd joys take flight,
And blessings wither from our sight,
And days are shorn of their delight:

When all Life's sheltering boughs are bare,
May we behold yon Temple fair
In strength and beauty standing there.

Welcome the storms which strip our bowers,
If we but see those golden towers,
And know, through Christ, that they are ours:

Let blasts of earthly care prevail,
Let earthly comforts fade and fail,
If Heaven shines through the shattered veil!

ON VISITING MY MOTHER'S GRAVE, ON HER BIRTHDAY.

A grassy grave, beneath a green fir-tree—
Emblem of life that never fades, well-won—
On a hill-side that fronts the rising sun,
As if it watched the eternal Dawn to see;
There, near the path where oft she walked with me,
My sainted mother sleeps, her life's work done,
Waiting till Time's fast-flowing sands are run,
And she is clothed with immortality.
It was her birthday; by her grave I passed,
And pausing wished her many glad returns—
As I was wont—each happier than the last:
Nor vainly—for in Heaven, fresh thrills of gladness
Will stir her soul, as year by year she learns
Some loved one safely housed from mortal sadness.

STARS AND FLOWERS.

(ON THE DEATH OF THE HON. MRS. FORESTER.)

The stars which tremble through the depths of air,
And with their jewelled clusters deck the skies,
Night after night allured his watching eyes:
While morn by morn she sought the blossoms fair,
Which in their fragile cups the dewdrops bear,
Like stars of earth; and with resplendent dyes
Called for the cunning hand, and motto wise,
To seize, and illustrate, their beauty rare.
But now he gazes sadly on the ground,
Bright with her flowers; while she, upborne afar,
Amid the shining orbs of Heaven is found,
In the dear presence of "The Morning Star:"
Henceforth a new attraction for his eye
To scan the holy spaces of the sky!

ON "MARY SHORT,"

WIFE OF THE LATE LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

As through St. Asaph's quiet streets I went
I saw a sculptured fountain softly flowing—
A cherished name inscribed above it, showing
What tearful memories with those streams were blent.
To the Cathedral next my steps I bent
Where in rich glass the same deep grief was glowing;
While, strewn upon a grave, flowers* freshly blowing,
Showed sorrow's early tenderness unspent.
Thus by three touching symbols was recorded
A Husband's life-love to his sainted Wife—
Through lonely years like precious treasure hoarded;
A love as ceaseless as that fountain streaming,
Like flowers fresh-gathered, still with fragrance rife,
And to old age with chastened radiance gleaming.

* Every day for a quarter of a century the Bishop scattered flowers on his wife's grave in going to prayers at the Cathedral.

A HUSBAND'S LOVE.*

Lower and lower he beholds her sink
In mortal weakness, till life's dragging wheels
Refuse to move; and in despair he feels
Her all but lost—on danger's utmost brink.
From love's forlornest hope he does not shrink;
Out of his own warm veins the blood he steals,
Pouring it into hers, while his brain reels:
'Twixt wife and husband, oh, how dear a link!
He gave his blood and saved his darling wife;
Great was the love, the self-devotion rare;
Dim shadow of His love beyond compare,
Who not for friends poured forth the purple life,
But enemies, and made of them His Bride,
To walk in white for ever at His side!

* The touching incident recorded in this sonnet recently occurred within the knowledge of my friend and neighbour, the Rev. J. M. Williams, Rector of Burnby, who communicated it to me. The young wife of a barrister, in the extremity of weakness, was only saved from death by the "transfusion" of her husband's blood into her veins. He fainted twice, but she recovered.

KATIE AND MABEL.

Alas! is Katie gone from mortal view?
Has that sweet face for ever passed away,
O'er which perpetual sunshine seemed to play—
That happy life which sparkled with the dew
Of morning, and Hope's fairest rainbow hue?
Can she be gone whose voice but yesterday
Sweetly was heard to promise and to pray,
As round the Font with that dear babe we drew.
She promised for that little one—and died;
She prayed, and then her spirit upwards flew;
But Charity's kind offices abide:
What though her home is now above the blue,
An angel she may stoop to Mabel's side,
And lure her to the Beautiful and True!

THE MOTHER.

Like Christiana with her little band
  Of gracious children round about her pressing—
  The model of a Mother—blest and blessing—
Amidst her family I see her stand.
Onward she leads them with a gentle hand,
  Wisely commanding, tenderly caressing;
  Her life-long happiness in them possessing,
She gives the life-long labour they demand.
Thus as she moves about her house serenely,
  Training those fresh young hearts for God and
    Heaven,
I hold her office to be more than queenly;
For to the glorious angels who stand nighest
  The Almighty's throne such "little ones" are given
To tend on earth for service of the Highest.

OVER MY SLUMBERING INFANT.

Over my slumbering infant,
A new-born "infant of days,"
In his dainty, nest-like cradle,
I hung with wondering gaze;
His tiny, delicate fingers,
His face so gentle and small,
And soft to the touch as velvet—
I silently pondered on all.

I saw in that slumbering infant
The dawn's first, glimmering ray,
And I thought of the glorious Future,
The long, everlasting day,
The vast, far-stretching duration,
The hidden powers of good,
That there lay quietly sleeping,
Like a folded flower i' the bud.

As a little, shining acorn
From its cup emboss'd and round
By a breath of wind is loosened,
And buries itself in the ground;
And behold! long centuries after
From that acorn small we see
Towering with growth umbrageous,
A mighty, monarch-tree.

As a mossy fountain bubbling
From its basin fringed with fern,
Glides along through leafy dingle,
Tinkling fall, and eddying turn;
But swells from a brook to a river,
And rolls majestic down,
Making glad the corn-covered valley,
Lone village and populous town.

So before that cradled infant
A mighty destiny lies,

Beginning mid earthly shadows,
Expanding beyond the skies:
A life of wide-branching influence
From that tiny form may grow,
And rivers of living water
Through time and eternity flow.

Oh! may the dew of God's blessing
On that tender plant be shed,
May the sunshine of His favour
Rest on that infant's head.
God turn his heart as the rivers
Even whithersoever He will,
That his life may reflect God's glory,
And His purpose of love fulfil!

LEARNER AND TEACHER.

See her pen with motion slow
O'er the stainless paper go;
Word by word she forms with care,
Eyes and fingers centred there.

So each day on her young mind
New ideas grow defined,
Which from Nature's touch she learns,
Or by Heavenly grace discerns.

While that other little maid
Lends her the experienced aid
Which an added year or two
Qualifies her, quite to do!

See her with superior air
Watch the pen, and cry, "Take care—
Make your l's a little longer,
Upstrokes finer, downstrokes stronger!"

She herself two years ago
Moved her pen with pace as slow;
But that time is far behind
To her fast-advancing mind.

We who hold the teachers' place,
Wise instructors of our race,
Oh, how few the years since we
Bowed beneath authority.

Oh, how little yet we know
Of the wonders hid below,
And the mysteries of love
Shining in the heavens above.

Here earth's alphabet we learn,
Soon to teach it in our turn;
But, Lord, we are children all,
And to Thee for wisdom call.

Master, take Thy pen and write
On our hearts with lines of light;
Once Thou wrotest on the ground,
And as low we would be found!

Learners, teachers—may we be
"Clothèd with humility;"
Sitting daily at Thy feet,
Till by grace for glory meet!

PRACTISING THE EASTER HYMN.

Hark, the voices rise and fall
Echoing from each hallowed wall,
"Jesus Christ is risen to-day,
Our triumphant holiday."

Easter Day not yet is here,
Gladdest feast of all the year;
But the colour streaks the skies
Where its glory soon will rise.

Soon the morning will roll round,
When there burst from underground
Such a Sunrise as the world
Ne'er before had seen unfurled.

On that Easter Day of old
'T was not crimson cloud or gold,
But a Form of dazzling white
Which surprised the morning light.

And our hearts within us burn,
Each year hailing its return;
And we watch with faithful eye
For the glory in the sky.

Let young voices then unite
With the organ's billowy might,
Practising the Easter Hymn
In the Church's twilight dim:

That with full melodious throat
They may warble every note,
When the morning bids them bless
Christ the Sun of Righteousness.

Thus in temples made with hands:
While in Nature's temple stands
Every creature brightly drest
In Spring's resurrection-vest.

Early buds their green unfold,
Early flowers spread out their gold;
Birds, new-deckt in shining feather,
Shake their sweetest notes together.

All make ready for the day
Which rolled Sin's 'great stone' away:
All blend music with life's breath
For the Conqueror of Death.

For that Easter Choir would we—
Hearts and voices—wanting be?
Oh, let us our part prepare
With wise thought and humble prayer.

Sin and sorrow let Faith leave
In Christ's grave on Easter Eve;
And on Easter morn arise
Singing to the cloudless skies!

ORDER.

(St. John, xx. 6, 7.)

When the Lord rose before the lagging day
  Blushed in the East, and that huge stone was rolled
  From the grave's entrance, sign of Death controlled,
And Sin's immense confusion cleared away;
Peace smiled, Law reigned—and lo! the graveclothes lay
  Arranged by careful fingers fold on fold;
  And of that calm, unfailing order told,
Which all God's works in heaven and earth display.
Lord, roll away my sin, and let Thy peace
  Rule in my heart, and conscientious Order;
Let strife with Law from all my being cease,
  And daily duty show no ravelled border:
Christ's law-fulfilling work my robe divine,
And that robe's fringe well-ordered work of mine.

"THE SHADOW OF PETER."

Acts v. 15, 16.

Where'er his saintly shadow passing fell,
He scattered healing virtue unawares;
Through crowded streets a silent charm he bears
And sick folk from their couches start up well.
Earth has not wholly lost that gracious spell;
Not vainly, wheresoe'er a Christian fares,
He casts a shadow, by the deeds and prayers
And noiseless influence which about him dwell.
Would I a useful, healing shadow throw,
Let me be found still walking in the sun—
Christ shining sweetly on the way I go,
Until the restful goal of life is won;
And may the world some lingering traces show
Of my day's work e'en when the day is done!

TO THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Spirit of light and love, abide with me;
Oh! may Thy "holy comfort" like a well
Of living water in my bosom dwell,
For ever springing up to heaven and Thee.
Then, if by quiet streams my course shall be,
The landscape fair of Thy sweet peace shall tell;
And if tempestuous billows round me swell,
I shall be calm amid the raging sea.
Where'er Thou leadest, let me never leave Thee,
Or lose the sound of Thy alluring voice,
Or by distrust or disobedience grieve Thee.
Still to Thy "godly motions" let me listen,
And as I journey on I shall rejoice,
Till to my dying eyes heaven's turrets glisten!

BIBLE SONNETS.—MISCELLANEOUS.

AARON'S DEATH ON MOUNT HOR.

In priestly robes, blue, gold, and purple, drest
  Up that steep mountain-side his way he wended;
  Weeping the people watched as he ascended
With fearless footsteps to his last, long rest.
At length he reached the cloud-enveloped crest,
  By son and brother mournfully attended,
  Whose hands removed (his priestly duties ended)
The glorious robes and splendour on his breast.
With that rich dress he saw his son invested,
  Then—Israel's priest no more—lay down to die,
And in his grave sublime and lonely rested:
Not like that wondrous Priest of ours possessing
  "Dyed garments" changeless as his Deity,
For ever living, loving, pleading, blessing.

JOTHAM'S PARABLE.

Once the tall trees of an aspiring wood,
  Besought an Olive tree to be their king—
  Which answered, On my boughs birds sit and sing,
And fragrant "fatness" fills me, berry and bud;
The Fig-tree next—which said, My fruit is good,
  And grateful "sweetness" to mankind I bring;
  The Vine spoke last, Leave me to creep and cling,
Content to "cheer" the world with my rich blood.
The useless Bramble only would be crowned,
  But soon in flaming ruin wrapped the trees,
And flung even stately Cedars on the ground:
Then let me ne'er forsake the narrow round
  Of lowly duties framed to serve and please,
In fruits of love ambitious to abound.

ELIJAH ON MOUNT CARMEL.

On Carmel's top, beneath the cloudless blue,
Behold the mighty prophet meekly kneeling,
While his strong cries and tears of earnest feeling
Moisten the ground with unaccustomed dew.
Stars falter forth, earth takes a duskier hue,
More fervent grows the voice of Faith appealing,
Till from the sea a little cloud comes stealing,
Like a man's hand, and blots the heavens from view.
Lord, I would humbly supplicate Thy face
For some sweet token of approaching showers,
Some soft low murmur of abundant grace
To cheer my thirsty fields and drooping bowers;
Nor would I cease to ask and ask again
Till Thy sure mercy melts in copious rain.

ELISHA'S CHAMBER.

"A little chamber" built "upon the wall"—
With stool and table, candlestick and bed—
Where he might sit, or kneel, or lay his head
At night or sultry noontide: this was all
A Prophet's need: but in that chamber small
What mighty prayers arose, what grace was shed,
What gifts were given—potent to wake the dead,
And from its viewless flight a soul recall.
And still what miracles of grace are wrought
In many a lowly chamber with shut door,
Where God our Father is in secret sought,
And shows Himself in mercy more and more;
Dim upper rooms with Heaven's own glory shine,
And souls are lifted to the life Divine.

DANIEL.

Imperial Persia bowed to his wise sway—
A hundred provinces his daily care;
A queenly city with its gardens fair
Smiled round him—but his heart was far away.
Forsaking pomp and power "three times a day"
For chamber lone, he seeks his solace there;
Through windows opening westward floats his prayer
Tow'rds the dear distance where Jerusalem lay.
So let me morn, noon, evening, steal aside,
And shutting my heart's door to Earth's vain pleasure
And manifold solicitudes, find leisure
The windows of my soul to open wide
Tow'rds that blest city and that heavenly treasure,
Which past these visible horizons hide.

GOD'S PLEA FOR NINEVEH.

Gracious and merciful, "shall not I spare
Nineveh, that great city," vast and grand,
Where "six score thousand" babes, a helpless band,
And multitudes of "cattle" claim my care;—
Dumb creatures, which their Maker's pity share
With infants, all too young to understand
Evil or good, or know one tiny hand
From its wee fellow—innocent as fair.
God cares for every beast or bird that roams
The grassy mountains or the azure skies,
Where meadows smile, or where the wild wave foams:
God counts our babes, and He will "not despise
One of these little ones" that cheer our homes,
The light, desire, and comfort of our eyes!

NATURE AND DUTY.

The sylvan floor was paved with flowers,
The pillared trees were arched with blue,
The bright-robed choir, amid the bowers,
Carolled sweet snatches as they flew.

Vernal delights were in their prime,
And birds and blossoms joined to say,
"Come, give to us this sunny time,
In Nature's beauteous temple stay.

See how we flit from tree to tree,
See how we bloom without a care!
Come, taste our glorious liberty,
Our happy leisure stay and share."

Thus pleads each bird of dulcet tongue,
  Thus spreads her wiles each painted flower,
Till from my heart they almost wrung
  Compliance in that tempting hour.

But Duty called my steps away,
  And bade me close my ears and eyes,
And give to her the unbroken day
  Far from birds' songs and beaming skies.

And I obeyed her stern behest,
  And turned from Nature's smiling bowers,
And to my arduous task addrest
  The patient undistracted hours.

Then Duty wove a bower for me,
  And hovered round on lightsome wing,
And scattered blossoms fair to see,
  And, like a bird, began to sing.

And there I sat awhile with joy
In Duty's inmost, radiant shrine,
Tasting God's peace without alloy,
And hearing melodies divine.

THE VOICE AT EVENTIDE.

Hushed was the music of the Sabbath-bell;
The twilight anthem of the birds was still,
Which late they warbled at their own sweet will;
When on mine ear a soothing murmur fell.
Borne on the evening breeze it seemed to swell
And wander fitfully from hill to hill,
And with its gracious harmony to fill
The grassy hollow of the listening dell.
That murmur was "the sound of many waters,"
Fall below fall—more sweet than note of bird,
Or Sabbath chime, or song of loving daughters,
Or any melody by mortals heard:
For it was Nature's symbol of the Voice,
Which when it speaks makes highest heaven rejoice!*

* See Archbishop Trench's Poems, p. 79.

THE POET'S GRAVE.*

Now no more we see him wander
On the mountain's breezy crest,
Or in glen sequestered rest,
Or by mossy fountain ponder.

No more follow the swift river,
As through rocky bed it brawls,
Or in rushing waterfalls
Makes sweet melodies for ever.

Winds still seek the mountain hoary,
Rustle in the glen below—
Music haunts the river's flow—
But from all has passed a glory.

* Composed for an old Gaelic air, in the possession of Mrs. Robinson, St. Catharine's Lodge, Cambridge.

Glen and mountain seem to know it,
And are wrapt in weeping cloud—
While the stream laments aloud—
Nature sorrowing for her Poet.

No more to the heathery mountain
Will the Poet sing again,
No more to the leafy glen,
To swift stream or mossy fountain.

But to him will sing for ever
Mountain breezes o'er his grave,
Mountain stream with whispering wave,
Leafy glen with rustling quiver.

Birch and aspen will bend o'er him,
Circling pines a requiem sigh,
While the river murmurs by,
And the mountain towers before him!

ON A POET-NATURALIST* ENTERING HIS SEVENTIETH YEAR.

Are these the tokens of old age? An ear
  Quick to discern each bird-note flitting by,
  Or heart of music poised unseen on high
'Twixt the lark's trembling wings? A vision clear
To catch all shades of colour that appear
  Mingling and fading in the sunset sky;
  Or evanescent forms and tints that fly
With leaves and blossoms through the changeful year?
A soul that grasps the eternal in its ken,
  And throbs to what is lovely, good, and true?
A hand that firmly holds the graphic pen
  Tipped with light fancies and poetic dew?
Are these old age's symptoms? Then, in sooth,
Such age is happy as immortal youth!

* My friend the Rev. T. A. Holland, Rector of Poynings, Sussex, and Author of "Dryburgh Abbey, and Other Poems."

ON A BURN OR BROOK WITHOUT A NAME

WHICH RUNS THROUGH NUNBURNHOLME AND BURNBY.

Sweet burn, a poet's tribute thou dost claim,
And rural neighbours will the praise endorse,
Who watch thee smiling, singing from thy source,
To bless thy native valley all thine aim.
Nameless thyself, yet thou hast given a name
To village after village in thy course,
For others' sake expending all thy force,
Intent on usefulness and not on fame.
We hear thee rippling with a pleasant lay
By bridge and garden, and the lesson own,
That song and sunshine cheer the useful way
Of those who live not for themselves alone—
That we—our duty done from day to day—
Shall live in others, though ourselves unknown.

ON A SEAGULL FLYING INLAND.

Bird of the buoyant wing and snow-white breast,
  Floating serenely over hill and dale,
  Far from thy billowy home, I bid thee hail!
Here in this woodland nook alight and rest.
Strange thoughts of murmuring waves with milky crest
  Thou bringest from afar—of freshening gale,
  And mighty sea-breadths swept by scudding sail—
Oh! how unlike this peaceful landscape blest.
So to the tranquil, meditative mind
  Comes some stray fancy or some "vague emotion,"
Light as a bird and fitful as the wind;
  Bringing dim hints from that mysterious ocean,
Whose billows break upon the unknown shore
Loud as the voice of God for evermore.

SONG.—"OH, WHERE?"*

Sweet violets, we joy to hail
Your lovely blooms once more,
Cærulean purple, snowy pale,
And fragrant as of yore;
Oh, where
Hide ye your petals fair,
Before
Mysterious winds of March
Come wandering down the sheltered vale
And tuft with rose the larch.†

Sweet nightingales, we joy to hear
Your happy, wildwood song

* Set to music by the Rev. Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, Bart. (Novello.)

† "When rosy plumelets tuft the larch."
In Memoriam.

Thrilling once more the moonlight clear
With music soft and strong;
Oh, where
Hide ye through Winter bare
And long,
Before the voice of Spring
Bids you return to charm our ear,
On ocean-wandering wing?

Dear saints in heaven, arrayed in light,
Singing to harps of gold,
Your glory ravishes my sight;
Where wandered ye of old?
Oh, where
Found ye that beauty rare—
Untold?
"'Neath a dim Tree on earth,
We washed our robes and made them white,
And tuned our harps to mirth!"

UNSEEN FLOWERS AND UNHEARD SONGS.

Ranging a lonely wood at dusk last night
I saw Spring-flowers spread out in dazzling sheets
Of white and gold, a galaxy of sweets,
With no one near to admire the lustrous sight.
Awake this morning when the first dim light
Of dawning day the wavering darkness meets,
A glorious burst of song my rapt ear greets,
A thousand throats in harmony unite,
While the world slept. But though unnoticed blowing
In unfrequented woods those Spring-flowers die,—
Though when men heed not music sweet is flowing,
Those songs God hears, those flowers attract His eye;
And when lone hearts with grateful love are glowing,
God sees that flower—that music mounts on high.

ON MURILLO'S "ECCE HOMO."

Behold the Man! His sacred forehead crowned
With the accursèd thorns, His mournful eyes
Uplifted to the inexorable skies,
His hands, which hold the scornful reed, fast-bound;
His precious blood slow-dropping to the ground
In payment of that awful Sacrifice,
Which fills the universe with dumb surprise
That no less glorious Victim could be found.
What sweet and solemn feelings I may borrow
From daily converse with that Face so marr'd
And full of unimaginable sorrow;
Oh! by that look Divine, may nothing sunder
My heart from Thee, and leave it cold and hard,
But may I still behold and love and wonder!

THE CHURCH SPIRE.

(BEBINGTON, NEAR LIVERPOOL.)

Onward the tide of population flows
From the vast port, and overleaps the bar
Of green seclusion; crowding villas mar
The charm of rural bowers from which arose
Yon graceful spire of old, yet still it shows
Its sacred summit, steadfast as a star,
And still it stands conspicuous from afar,
The skyward-pointing symbol of repose.
So the fair form of evangelic Truth
Amid encroaching error shines serene,
In changeless beauty and immortal youth:
So 'mid the fretting cares of daily life
The spirit of true piety is seen
With thoughts of GOD calming Earth's noise and strife.

ON AN OPAL RING.

I chanced to look upon an opal ring;
  I gaze with wonder as the sun's bright beams
  Bring out its purple, azure, roseate gleams,
And each rich tint of mystic colouring.
But hearing who had owned the beauteous thing,
  Down in the shade I place it, when it seems
  Only a dull pale white—as fairest dreams
That Fancy paints at the dim dawn take wing.
I thought of her who once had worn it gaily,
  Its glow reflecting in her gladsome eyes,
As with fond look she gazed upon it daily;
Alas! young Love had soon withdrawn his shining,
  Now sad and pale she sits i' the shade and sighs,
Her radiant hopes meekly to God resigning.

BLUE WINGS AND BROWN.

Blue wings delight in azure skies,
Not yellow leaves, and landscape drear;
A Summer friend, the swallow flies
The falling fortunes of the year.

No more that arrowy form we greet,
Crossing our path with sunny gleam,
Skimming along the village street,
Kissing its shadow in the stream.

Blue wings have traversed the blue deep,
Inconstant favourites changed their sky,
And now o'er fairer fields they sweep,
Which under lovelier azure lie.

Brown wings are true to the brown trees,
And 'mid the branches red and sere
Sit crimson breasts, and sing at ease,
Contented with the fading year.

A Winter friend, in snow and rain,
Flits Robin Redbreast to and fro,
He eyes us through the window-pane,
And brings a comfortable glow;

Blending with chastened fireside mirth,
And Christmas holly-berries red—
Dear token which the ransomed earth
Twines round her infant Saviour's head!

THE VIEW FROM CHRIST CHURCH PARSONAGE, WEST WALLS, CARLISLE.

What contrasts strange diversify this view!
In front an ever-moving, noisy scene
Of trains and traffic—rows of houses mean,
Shadowed by factories huge of dusky hue—
Churches and chimneys tall; with glimpses through
Of quiet fields—a cemetery green
And still—while in the distance stand serene
The mountains veiled in soft aerial blue.
Even so the Pastor toils 'mid busy men,
Bearing Heaven's balm to soothe Earth's weary sighs—
Cheered by the smile of Nature now and then—
By sight of man's mortality made wise—
And through life's struggle keeping in his ken
The eternal hills which in the distance rise.

LODORE WATERFALL.*

Who tore these awful towering rocks asunder
  Cleaving this ragged fissure, darkly grand?
  And down the chasm precipitous, Whose hand
This torrent hurled in everlasting thunder?
It was not Nature's blind caprice or blunder—
  But here the Lord for His own glory plann'd
  A fane stupendous, through all time to stand,
That men might bow the head in reverent wonder.
Lord, 'mid the torrent's roar this day I raise
  My voice within these walls sublime and hoary;
To Nature's ceaseless organ-peal of praise
  I add my feeble words to swell Thy glory,
And viewing Thy majestic works and ways
  In humblest adoration bend before Thee!

* Composed at the foot of the Fall.

WASTDALE CHURCH AND MOUNTAINS.

Beside a Chapel quaint and small I knelt,
By yews and laurels screened, a circling pale,
Right in the heart of silent, lone Wastdale:
The towering mountains with a mighty belt
Of shadow rose all round me, and I felt
Beneath their awfulness my heart to quail;
For His own House God claimed this solemn vale,
And throned amid the eternal hills He dwelt.
Gable, Great-End, Yewbarrow, and Lingmell,
Climbed with their scarr'd and giant forms on high,
By hugest Scawfell led; but green Kirkfell,
With his near vastness, mostly drew my eye
And cheered my spirit; for he seemed to tell
Here for long ages prayer had sought the sky!

ON AN UNFREQUENTED TARN.*

O solitary Tarn, uplifted high,
  Seen only once, and left alas! too soon:
  For ever silvered with the rising moon,
For ever crimsoned with the sunset sky,
Thine image will abide in Memory's eye;
  (A moment's vision, but a lifetime's boon):
  While Memory's ear retains the soft low tune
Which to the breeze thy circling rushes sigh.
Have other eyes beheld thine evening glory?
  Have other ears caught thy sweet undersong?
Or art thou lost amid these summits hoary,
  Unheeded as the ages roll along?
What then? 'Twas God ordained thy humble story:
  To be content and smile to thee belong!

* Opposite Seatoller, on High Knot, Borrowdale, 2,000 feet high.

GRAY AT GRASMERE* (1769) AND WORDSWORTH'S GRAVE (1869.)

A CENTENARY SONNET.

Since that still Autumn 'tis the hundredth year,
When from this eminence a Poet's eyes
Welcomed an "unsuspected Paradise"—
Green vale, grey church, and azure waters clear:
For sweetest "Elegy" that name is dear;
But not more dear than his who yonder lies,
To guard whose fame the mountains round him rise,
And to reflect it, smiles his loved Grasmere.
There, in that "country churchyard" we may hail
The "heaving turf" where a great Poet slumbers;
While lake and island, village, rock, and vale,
Resound for ever his melodious numbers,
Who o'er this Paradise shed fairer beauty
With deathless songs of Nature, Man, and Duty.

* See the poet Gray's charming account of his walking tour through the Lake Country in Mason's "Life" of him.

DOVER CLIFF.*

SHAKSPERE'S TERCENTENARY, 1864.

Up Shakspere's Cliff I climbed, and felt the ground
Half sacred. That white bulwark of our land
Seemed Nature's monument to her Poet grand;
His name the murmuring surge seemed to resound—
His mighty genius lingered all around.
On that chalk cliff Shakspere once took his stand
And while the breeze his brow capacious fanned,
Looked down o'er that same sea to the sky's bound.
When to the grassy summit I had mounted,
A yellow cowslip crimson-dropt I found,
Marked with the same five spots* Shakspere once counted:
Then thought I, as o'er Cliff and flower I linger,
All Nature for his head a garland wound,
Who touched things great or small with Truth's own finger.

* See King Lear iv. 6, and Cymbeline ii. 2.—

"Cinque spotted like the crimson drops
I' the bottom of a cowslip."

ON TRAVELLING BY RAIL TO CAMBRIDGE,

THROUGH LINCOLNSHIRE, TENNYSON'S COUNTRY.

A level and monotonous expanse
  Of barren moorland meets the outward eye,
Taking no beauty from the sun's bright glance,
  And all the Autumn glories of the sky.
  But yet that student-traveller's heart beats high,
Absorbed he sits as in a blissful trance,
  And while the dreary landscape hurries by.
Gazes as on some scene of Old Romance.
A circling radiance hovers o'er the place,
  To seeing eyes, that gave a poet birth,
    And woke his being to Divine emotion:
Thine, Laureate, is the rare transfiguring grace
  Which lifts these plains to classic heights of earth,
    Where pilgrims of all time pay heart-devotion!

CAMBRIDGE MEMORIES.

All hail, ye dear familiar towers,
  Rising before me like a dream,
Dreamt long ago amid the bowers
  Which shade that classic stream.

On trees and battlements I gaze,
  Till through a veil of gathering tears
I dimly see the purple haze
  Of far-off happy years.

Under those studious walls I walked
  With buoyant step, when life was young,
And Hope beside me gaily talked,
  And birds around me sung.

The pleasant flutter of the gown
I feel as in the bygone time,
In grassy court, or quiet town,
Or avenue of lime.

Once more beneath the dim expanse
Of fretted roof I hear the roll
Of organ, wave on wave, advance
And flood my raptured soul.

Once more I greet the mighty shade
Of Newton toiling in his tower,
Or glorious Milton as he strayed
In youth's fresh morning hour.

With cherished friend I thrid the gloom
Of college cloister as of yore;
Or hour by hour in lonely room
O'er learning's page I pore.

With eager crowds beneath the feet
Of saint or sage I take my place,
And gather flowers of wisdom sweet
The after-years to grace.

Hail, then, ye dear familiar towers,
Sacred to learning and to truth,
Amid whose academic bowers
Dwell England's choicest youth.

Long may ye flourish as of old,
With sister-towers, a goodly band,
The light of life on high to hold
And pour it o'er the Land!

REST BY THE SEA.

"Come ye yourselves apart, and rest awhile,
With labour weary, and with crowds oppress;"
Straightway they cross the sea at His behest,
Their leisure sweetened by the Master's smile.
"Come to the lonely shore, or forest-aisle,"
To us His gracious word is now addrest,
"Come to the mountain-solitude, and rest,
Where peaceful hours may careful hearts beguile."
My Master, in Thine hand it is to measure
My times of work and weariness for Thee:
My times of rest return at Thy good pleasure,
By lake, or mountain, wood or murmuring sea:
But, to give sweetness to my hours of leisure,
Come Thou Thyself, O Lord, and rest with me!

THE TIDES.

Up the long slope of this low sandy shore
  Are rolled the tidal waters day by day;
  Traces of wandering feet are washed away,
Relics of busy hands are seen no more.
The soiled and trampled surface is smoothed o'er
  By punctual waves that high behests obey;
  Once and again the tides assert their sway,
And o'er the sands their cleansing waters pour.
Even so, Lord, daily, hourly, o'er my soul
  Sin-stained and care-worn, let Thy heavenly Grace—
A blest, atoning flood—divinely roll,
  And all the footsteps of the world efface,
That like the wave-washed sand this soul of mine,
Spotless and fair, smooth and serene, may shine!

NORTH AND SOUTH OF FLAMBOROUGH HEAD.

North of yon jutting headland wild waves beat
The frowning cliffs with multitudinous roar;
Foiled by that mighty rampart evermore,
They die in angry foam about its feet.
Here, in this sheltered bay, with whisper sweet,
The smiling ripples kiss the level shore;
White sails flit by and white wings hover o'er
The azure waves which skies of azure meet.
Those stormy breakers and this peaceful bay
Nought sunders save a narrow promontory.
My soul! as quick a step, as short a way,
Divides this life, with its dark, troubled story,
From the calm haven of eternal day,
Its bliss angelic and unruffled glory!

THE BUOY BELL.

(FILEY-BRIG.)

O'er a calm sea, beneath a heaven of blue,
Strikes on the ear the tolling of a bell,
Fitful and faint, with melancholy swell:
No hint of present danger meets the view
In sky or ocean, but the Summer through,
By day and night, is heard that plaintive knell,
Like some old voice prophetic moved to tell
The burden of the future—stern and true.
So in our seasons of serenest peace,
When life's smooth waves with scarce a breath are stirred,
The sound as of a warning bell is heard,
Which calls and calls again, and will not cease,—
God's Word of grace and truth, that soft and clear
Rings to reflection ere the storm draw near.

GOD IS LOVE.

I sat beneath a full-leaved tree;
The south wind stirred each harp-like bough,
And set the whispered music free,
While shadows danced upon my brow.

The wild flowers laughed before my feet,
Wreathing bright chains of pink and blue;
And scattering mingled odours sweet
Which floated on the morning dew.

The birds poured forth a blended voice,
Warbling their bliss around, above:
With leaves and flowers they sang, Rejoice,
O mortal man, for God is Love.

I sat beneath another Tree
  In thought; its outstretcht arms were bare;
It crowned the hill called Calvary;
  No happy leaves were whispering there.

No flowers about that Tree were found,
  But a sad wreath of thorns I saw;
And dewy drops were on the ground,
  But such as filled my soul with awe.

And all the birds had flown away,
  Except one gentle, white-winged Dove,
Which hovered near and seemed to say
  With gracious accents, God is Love.

Then let me rest beneath this Tree,
  Where precious thorns Earth's blossoms hide,
And let a sweet voice sing to me,
  Thy God is Love, for He has died!

GIFTS TO JESUS.*

Take, Lord, these gifts, small offerings of our hand,
Though their own worth acceptance none command:
Take, and while taking them, Thou Saviour sweet,
E'en what Thou takest, Thou wilt render meet:
Whether Thou deem them worthy eye or touch,
Thou wilt be able, Lord, to make them such;
Kind e'en to gifts themselves, as to those giving,
Thou givest, both when giving and receiving.

* Translated from Crashaw's "Epigrammata Sacra." See the "Complete Works of Richard Crashaw," (vol. ii. p. 203,) in "The Fuller's Worthies' Library" of my friend the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, St. George's, Blackburn, for which edition the present writer has had the privilege of being a fellow-worker in the "labour of love" of translating Crashaw's Sacred Latin Poems.

On Sending My Poems to the Press.

May God be with thee, little book, I pray;
For thou hast ta'en irrevocable flight
Out of thy nest, where many a noon and night
Peaceful I brooded o'er some woodland lay.
God prosper thee upon thine unknown way:
In shady places be a gleam of light,
Bearing beneath thy wings a message bright
To help the mourner through his lonesome day:
And where the tranquil beams of Summer fall
Upon the daisied grass, or the warm glow
Dances round happy hearths, go gently call
Heavenward the thoughts which dwell too much below:
Thus be thy voice like holy Church-bells heard,
Or warble for The Master like a bird!

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